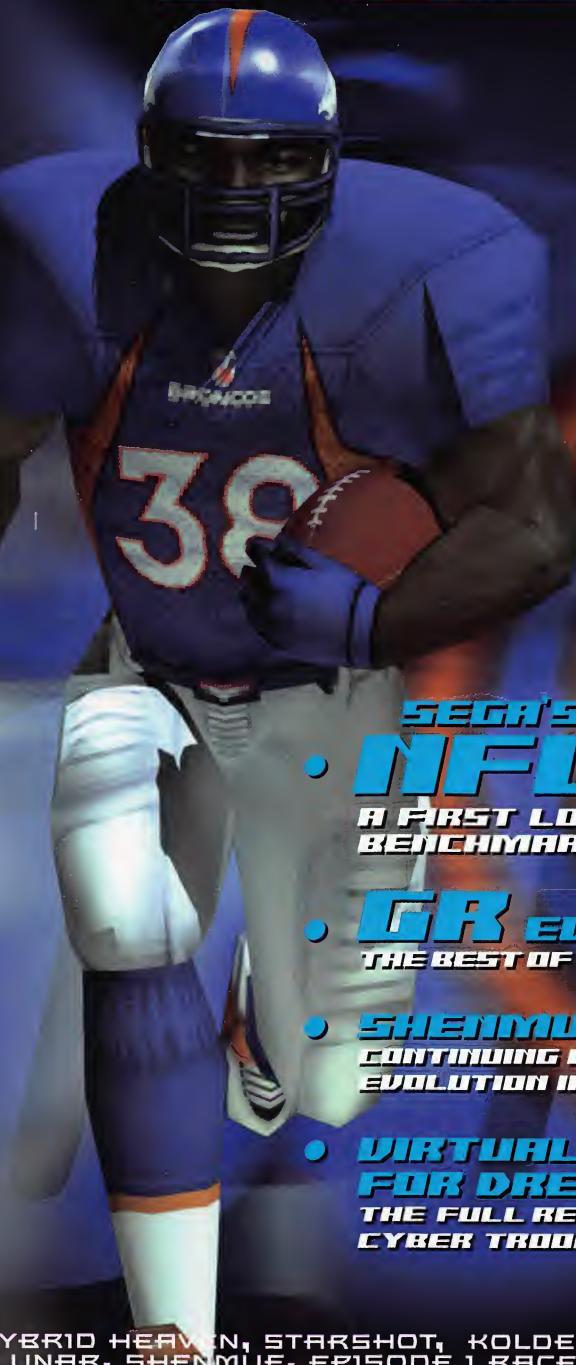


Gamers' Republic

COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE



- **SEGA'S NFL 2000**
A FIRST LOOK AT THE NEXT BENCHMARK IN SPORTS GAMING!
- **GR EDITORS' TOP 20**
THE BEST OF THE BEST - SO FAR
- **SHENMUE:**
CONTINUING COVERAGE ON THE NEXT EVOLUTION IN ROLE PLAYING
- **VIRTUAL ON SEQUEL FOR DREAMCAST?**
THE FULL REPORT ON AM3'S CYBER TROOPERS UPGRADE

R-TYPE DELTA, HYBRID HEAVEN, STARSHOT, KOLDELKA, WORLD DRIVER, LUNAR, SHENMUE, EPISODE 1 RACER



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Gamers' Republic MANIFESTO

I discovered two things at this year's E3. One, that our readers are extremely cool people, and two, violence in video games is as much a non-issue with them and the development community as it is with us. In fact, looking around I noticed just how congenial our industry is. There doesn't exist any apparent malice or bad elements in the world of video games. Then again, I didn't go to all the parties.

This was a great show. Like a kick off to the new Millennium, dreams of new hardware were in the air, with Sega's already a reality. Words cannot express how great it was to see Sega in full force again, with an impressive new booth displaying the games that will help make the launch of the Dreamcast the biggest ever in terms of available software and technological support. With the system coming in under \$200 with full modem support, any doubts that anyone may have had can be safely laid to rest. Sony and Nintendo delivered the goods as well and had a couple of surprise announcements of their own. In the Sony camp, word is that the PS2 will make its debut next fall and Nintendo's codename "Dolphin" hardware shouldn't be too far behind. Gaming in the next century is going to be out of this world. Read all about this year's E3 and our impressions of it, beginning on page 28. Enjoy!

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SUCCESS.

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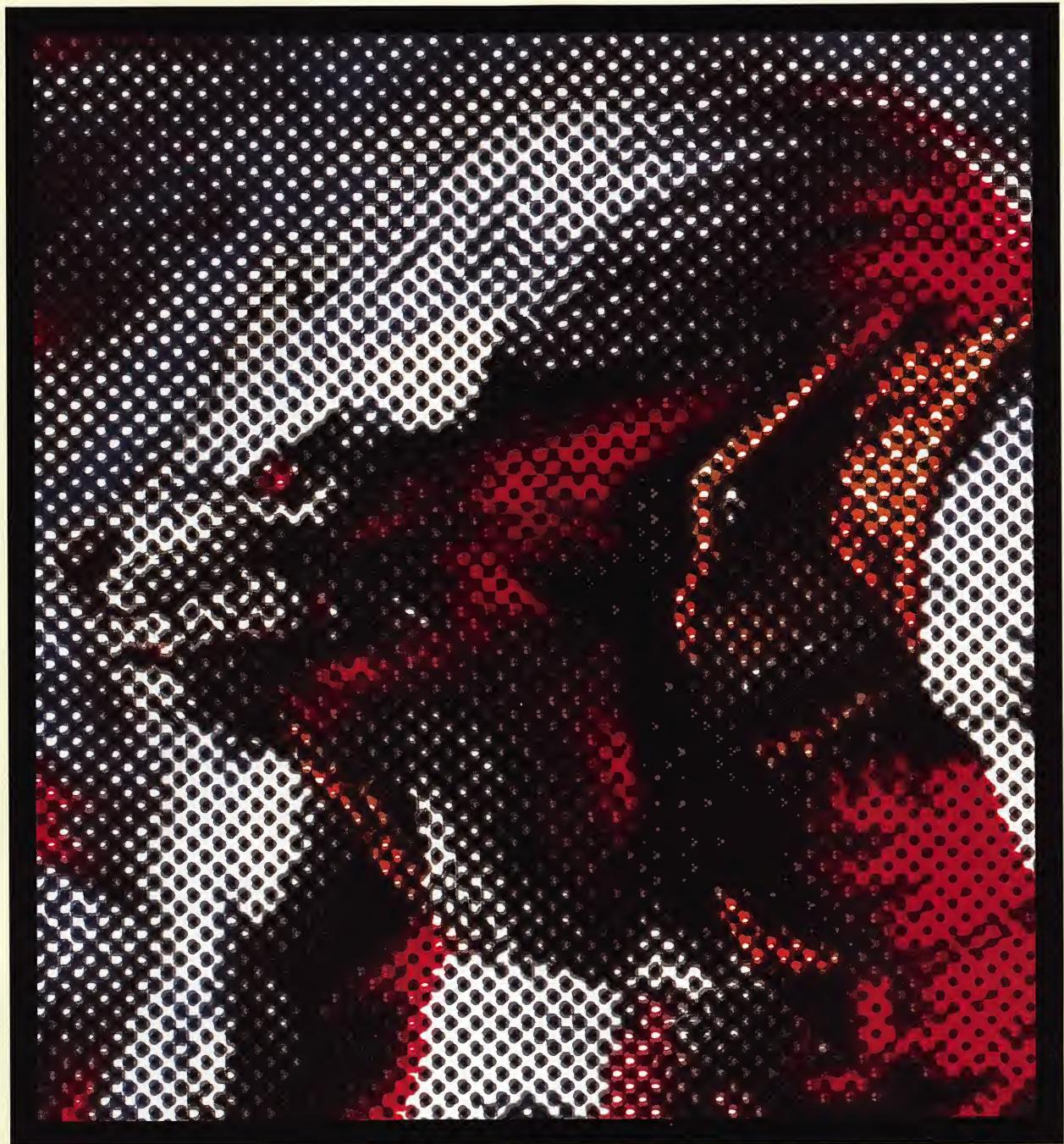
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Q: Do you see a ballerina in worn slippers and pink tutu smelling a faded rose?





Yes, I see the ballerina. I also happen to wear my pants too tight.



No, I see the noble savage that lurks deep in my subconscious mind – after all, man is a combination of the sophisticated and the primitive, of the learned and the instinctual. Bloody Roar™ II is the perfect outlet for my animal aggression. Every scorching slash, pulverizing punch and bone-cracking combination is rendered with deadly clarity. I can morph into multiple beasts, including hidden monstrous warriors. I can even create my own devastating fighting combinations. We should never try to deny the animal. We need to unleash the beast within us all or die trying.



Fig. (a)



Fig. (b)

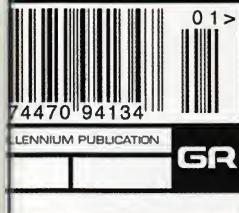
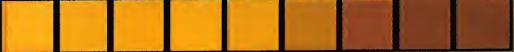


Fig. (c)



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VOL. 2, ISSUE # 2 GAMERS' REPUBLIC

TRANSCONTINENTAL GAMING GUIDE
A MILLENNIUM PROJECT

NFL 2000 .18

"Sega Sports is Back!" Some questioned Sega's new commitment to sports games, but our early look at their new football title for Dreamcast will have the detractors eating their words and running back to their consoles for the best sports games ever!

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ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO .28

Here it is: all the hottest news straight from the biggest videogame convention of the year. And since it's only for industry types, allow us to be your inside scoop for all the hottest games coming out in the next year!

frontlines

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE, NETWORK JUNGLE...



Ms. Iori sings a song from *Shenmue*; the character actors demonstrate how they record their voices for the game; and Yu Suzuki explains about Koh's face.



Masaya Matsukaze (Ryo Hazuki) has a go at the Free Battle Time Attack while Hazuki Ishigaki (Rei Shenhua) auctions off an original print signed by Yu Suzuki.

Over the spring holiday season Sega participated in the Network Jungle II Digitaliland...

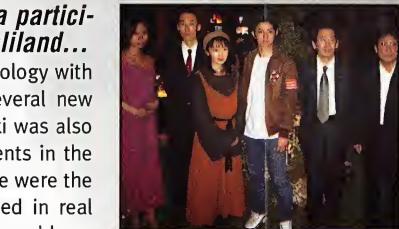
...an event showing the uses of digital technology with a giant *Shenmue* booth. Not only were several new demo games available to play, but Yu Suzuki was also on hand to talk about the latest developments in the game as well. The most eye catching of these were the high-quality faces that could be manipulated in real time as they spoke about the game. Not only could you rotate the heads around, but you could also zoom in and out of the face.

Yu Suzuki spoke about the faces...

"Each of the faces used specular reflection to simulate the light reflecting off the moisture in the eye, and all the characters' lines are lip-synched using special software to match the bone and muscle movements of the jaw and mouth to the sound. I had hoped to show off 16 characters; however, it took two weeks for us to convert each character from a low- to high-polygon model, so we only had time for four of them. I'd like all the speaking characters in the game to be high-polygon models, but there are too many characters in the game and they all speak, so only the main ones will be converted. In total, the amount of speech in the game is already around 30 to 40 times the size of a normal movie. As *Shenmue* is more than 10 times the size I'd originally intended it to be, I've divided it into chapters. In Chapter One: Yokosuka, there are four main locations consisting of two residential areas, Dobuita and the port. We've already created 197 characters for the first three locations with another 47 or so for the port. In total it could easily go over 300."



One of the four faces shown belonged to Chai. The headphones next to the Dreamcast let you hear what he was saying.



Twelve brand new characters, including a pigeon, could be downloaded. With the 16 at the TGS, this makes a total of 28.



For those who have seen Square's old man demo for the PS 2, it's clear that the Dreamcast easily has the performance to match that. It'll be interesting to see how *Shenmue* develops from here on.



Two new mini-games, *Excite QTE2* and *Darts*, proved that even a 5-year-old could play *Shenmue*. But would they want to?



One of the new QTEs has you trying to fight off a drunken foreigner at night, and failure has Ryo smashed on the head with a bottle.

POCKET MONSTERS FESTIVAL '99



From March 27th to April 29th, at five locations across the country...

...Nintendo celebrated the third anniversary of Pocket Monster with a special festival dedicated to those die-hard Pokemon fans who can't get enough of their favorite Nintendo games. We dropped into the Tokyo event to see exactly what was going on and were pleasantly surprised to see a lot of interesting things. While it has to be said that it certainly doesn't compare to the Nintendo Space World Show, it was still a great opportunity for many people to play a lot of new games and make some new Pokemon friends.



Hundreds of people queued to play Pokemon Stadium 2, especially the various 4-player mini-games on offer.



Most of the N64 units were either for Pokemon Snap or Pokemon Stadium 2, but both were equally popular.

For the die-hard gamers, you could play in the official Pokemon League for a chance to win fame and fortune.



The Pokemon Festival had more than just N64 games...

...to keep everyone occupied. The main stage had numerous special programs such as this Pokemon News & Weather feature. Away from the N64, everyone was exchanging data from their Pokemon Card GB game or chatting with new friends.



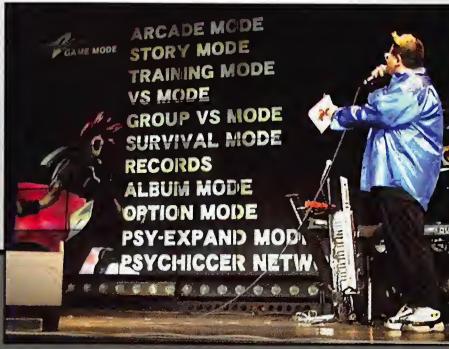
There were lots of special stage events...

...where kids could play for big Pokemon prizes. Almost as popular as the N64 was the Pokemon Card game, which could be seen everywhere around the event hall. Best of all was a special cleaning service, where two engineers would clean any GB or GB cart for free!

PSYCHIC FRIENDS...

Although Taito have only just released *Psychic Force 2012* for the Dreamcast...

...the PlayStation version looks like it's going to be far superior in every way. Even graphically it looks awesome, but Taito are really going out of the way to add a lot of great new features to the game as well: an initial selection of ten characters will be joined by six hidden characters, including Gemma, Sonia and Brad (shown here on a special postcard given away free at the event); support for the Pocket Station; an anime movie; an original theme song (which was sung here by Hironobu Kageyama); and loads of new game modes.



On April 18 at one of Tokyo's leading dance scene night clubs, Velfarre, Taito held a special Thanksgiving Day party...

...to announce the development of *Psychic Force 2* for the PlayStation. Other than the actual announcement itself, the main event of the day was, of course, a special live performance from Zunta, Taito's very own sound team responsible for many of Taito's greatest game music hits. This alone was enough to attract hundreds of female fans from around Japan who gathered in the hundreds outside the club.



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SHOP FAMITSU!

For those who can't wait to get the latest character dolls...

...or limited-edition plush toys, paradise has arrived in the shape of a new specialist gaming shop from Famitsu. Located in Akihabara, all the coolest goods can now be purchased any time you want!



DC GETS A BAD RAP...

The Dreamcast's image appears to be suffering. At one fair we found a stall that had a Dreamcast and Pocketstation...



...as equal first prizes! Surely the Dreamcast is worth more than that? In a separate incident, we discovered one shop that had actually placed a PlayStation inside a Dreamcast cabinet. Does this boy now believe that Omega Boost is coming to the DC?



SEAMAN SPEAKS!

At the TGS the most interesting booth there was that of Vivarium's Seaman for the Dreamcast...

...because it was like nothing anyone had ever seen before. With strange skeletons under glass cases and dead animals floating in strange liquids, it really made a change from the typical booth display. Indeed, such was its popularity that the creators decided to put Seaman on display again at an aquarium for all to see. However, this time the public had the first opportunity to actually communicate with Seaman itself via a special microphone device.



Although there were two buttons, only the red one seemed to do anything. When you wanted to speak to Seaman you had to keep it pressed down, although signs warned against pressing it for too long, because it would make Seaman angry. The microphone was unusually high quality, but, in order to keep the final costs down, it's unlikely that the final Dreamcast version will be retain this level of quality. After trying every word we could think of, we began to realize that long phrases were a little beyond Seaman at this point, so we kept our sentences as short as possible. Here's are the fruits of our overseas correspondent's chat with Seaman. →



When we arrived at the Seaman display we found no evidence of the weird exhibits that had adorned Vivarium's TGS booth; however, we were told that they had been covered up because of their somewhat shocking nature. Braving any ancient Egyptian curses still in effect, we were permitted to uncover the secret panels in private and photograph the ancient remains of Seaman's ancestors for this report.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE JUICY PIECES!

We reported last month from the Tokyo Toy Show about some of the great game-related toys coming out soon, but didn't say anything about what's out now...



In particular, the cheapest and most popular toys available almost everywhere are the little toy gifts you can get in boxes of candy. They only cost around ¥100, but with a whole set to collect it can gobble up a little kid's pocket money really quickly. Here's a bunch of toys we managed to collect on one trip to the supermarket. Currently, the biggest seller is the Pokemon TV anime finger puppet collection.



EXCLUSIVE Q&A WITH SEAMAN!

GAMERS' REPUBLIC: Seaman.

SEAMAN: Can I help you?

GR: Good day!

SM: Thanks.

GR: Are you well?

SM: Yeah.

GR: How's life?

SM: I can't hear you.

GR: LIFE! [shouting]

SM: Aarrggh! Don't surprise me! [angry]

GR: Life.

SM: Give it up! I'm that kind of Seaman.

GR: Is the Dreamcast selling well?

SM: What did you say?

GR: Dreamcast.

SM: I don't understand.

GR: You're cute.

SM: You're right there.

GR: How are you? [repeated 5 times]

SM: Enough already! [angry] Would you let me check something? Are you a man or a woman?

GR: A man.

SM: Ah, a man! What star sign are you?

GR: Virgo.

SM: Right, Virgos are fairly selfish.

GR: You're cool.

SM: It's often said.

GR: Are you well? [repeated 5 times]

SM: You're stubborn aren't you? I'd like to ask you something again. Are you a man or a woman?

GR: Woman.

CAPCOM PLAZA OPENS!

On April 24 Capcom opened their first arcade in Tokyo on the basement floor of Loft in Kichijoji City...



The center of attention was of course Street Fighter III 3rd Strike, but there are plenty of other games as well from Sega, Konami and others. In order to focus on the Capcom image the tokens used for gambling have Ryu on the back and even the little hand wipes have Chun-li on them. Plaza Capcom is certainly different from your usual game center.



She Came Tonight! You Must Come Too!

To the Editor:

Few economic analysis would deny that the massive increase in military spending over the last 10 years, in particular the record rise in procurement of expensive and complicated weapons systems, is partly responsible for the growing weaknesses in the United States economy - most notably for the serious underinvestment in civilian industry and the diversion of some of our best scientists and engineers from much-needed nonmilitary research. Even Israel senior Defense Department officials now concede that the military buildup was badly conceived and mismanaged — yet another example of how inter-

The floor to the arcade is printed with pages from a newspaper running fictitious news stories about Capcom and their characters.

OUT OF WORK???

What happens to all the old characters that aren't wanted anymore?

We went out and searched for stars of old that haven't been heard of recently. After Bandai's excellent fighting game, the Masked Rider has ended up in front of a Japanese shrine hidden in the heart of the countryside, a three-meter-high Ultraman stands unloved outside a multi-story office block, and Sonic wanders the streets of Ikebukuro in search of stardom.



POKEMON ANNIVERSARY

Pocket Monster celebrated its 3rd anniversary...



...in style at the Pokemon Centre in Tokyo. As the number one place for all things Pokemon, it was only fitting that they should produce a limited edition Pokemon Color Game Boy. Other than its new color

combination, with an orange front and blue back, it has several of your favorite Pokemon drawn on it as well. It also comes with two Pikachu batteries.



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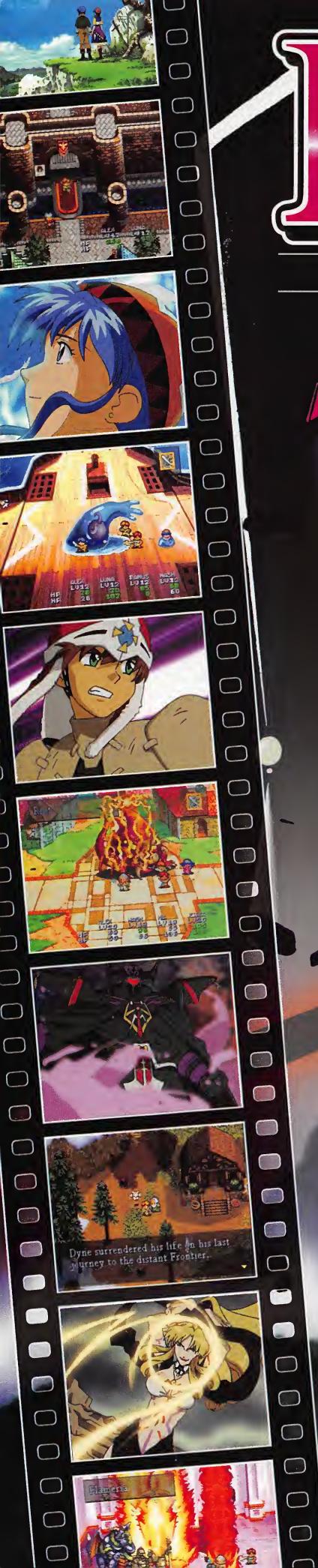
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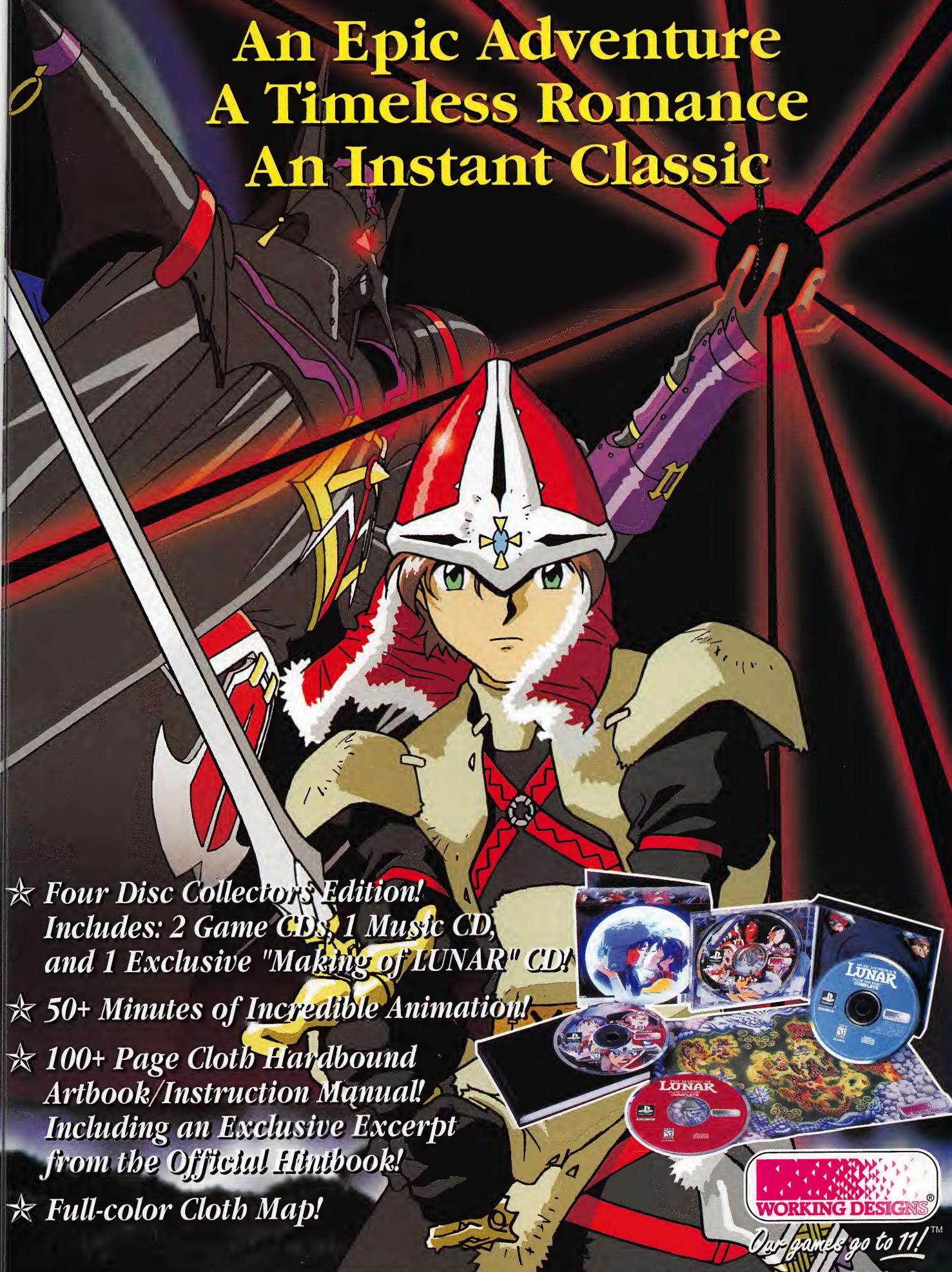
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top ten selling playstation titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD APRIL 1999



- 1 **SYPHON FILTER** 989
- 2 **SILENT HILL** KONAMI
- 3 **FROGGER** HASBRO
- 4 **CRASH BANDICOOT 2** SONY
- 5 **ARMY MEN 3D** 3DO

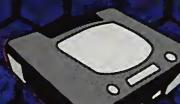
- 6 **RUGRATS** THQ
- 7 **TOMB RAIDER 2** EIDOS
- 8 **GRAN TURISMO RACING** SONY
- 9 **NEED FOR SPEED: STAKES** EA
- 10 **WCW/NWO THUNDER** THQ



top ten selling nintendo 64 titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD APRIL 1999

- 1 **MARIO PARTY** NINTENDO
- 2 **ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME** NINTENDO
- 3 **GOLDENEYE 007** NINTENDO
- 4 **SW ROGUE SQUADRON** LUCASARTS
- 5 **SUPER MARIO 64** NINTENDO
- 6 **MARIO KART 64** NINTENDO
- 7 **WCW/NWO REVENGE** THQ
- 8 **SOUTHPARK** ACCLAIM
- 9 **BEETLE ADVENTURE** EA
- 10 **NASCAR '99** EA



top ten selling saturn titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD APRIL 1999



- 1 **CROC:LEGEND OF GOBBOS** FOX
- 2 **NHL '97** EA
- 3 **P.T.O. II** KOEI
- 4 **NBA LIVE '98** EA
- 5 **MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH** WD
- 6 **HEIR OF ZENDOR** KOEI
- 7 **IRON MAN X-O MANOWAR** ACCLAIM
- 8 **MADDEN '97** EA
- 9 **SONIC 3D BLAST** SEGA
- 10 **DARKLIGHT CONFLICT** EA



top ten selling pc titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD APRIL 1999

- 1 **SIMCITY 3000** MAXIS
- 2 **HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC 3** 3DO
- 3 **EVERQUEST** 989
- 4 **ALPHA CENTAURI** EA
- 5 **CABELA'S B.G.H. 2** HEAD GAMES
- 6 **FROGGER** HASBRO
- 7 **BALDUR'S GATE** INTERPLAY
- 8 **HALF LIFE** SIERRA
- 9 **X-WING ALLIANCE** LUCASARTS
- 10 **DEER AVENGER** S&S



top ten overall console

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD APRIL 1999

- 1 **POKEMON BLUE-GB** NINTENDO
- 2 **POKEMON RED-GB** NINTENDO
- 3 **SYPHON FILTER-PS** 989
- 4 **MARIO PARTY-N64** NINTENDO
- 5 **SILENT HILL-PS** KONAMI
- 6 **FROGGER-PSX** HASBRO
- 7 **ZELDA: OoT-N64** NINTENDO
- 8 **GOLDENEYE 007-N64** NINTENDO
- 9 **ZELDA:LINKS AWAKENING-GBC** NINTENDO
- 10 **CRASH BANDICOOT 2-PS** SONY



world republic top ten games



japan

1 POKEMON PINBALL GB	6 WORLD STADIUM 3 PS
2 DANCE DANCE REV. PS	7 SAGA FRONTIER 2 N64
3 SUPER ROBOT WAR final PS	8 POCKET MONSTER SNAP GB
4 BUST A MOVE 2 PS	9 SUPER ROBOT WAR F PS
5 GLAY COMPLETE WORKS PS	10 DEVIL SUMMONER PS

*FROM APRIL 12 ~ APRIL 18 1999

united kingdom

1 RIDGE RACER 4 PS	6 RUGRATS PS
2 FIFA '99 N64/PS	7 TOMB RAIDER PS/PC
3 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER PC	8 GRAND THEFT AUTO PS/PC
4 METAL GEAR SOLID PS	9 S.W.:X-WING ALLIANCE PC
5 CRASH BANDICOOT 2 SONY	10 A BUG'S LIFE PS/PC

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD THE MONTH OF APRIL 1999

gamers' republic top ten games

*BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH MAY 18, 1999



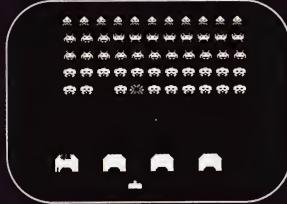
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1 APE ESCAPE PS
2 TONIC TROUBLE N64
3 EPISODE ONE: RACER N64
4 SONIC ADVENTURE DC
5 ELEMENTAL GIMMICK GEAR DC
6 DRAKAN PC
7 EARTHWORM JIM 3D N64
8 DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2 SNES
9 SILHOUETTE MIRAGE PS
10 LUNAR: SSSC PS



t. strutton



1 SPACE INVADERS ARCADE
2 PAC-MAN ARCADE
3 GRAN TURISMO PS
4 EXCITEBIKE NES
5 Y'S 1 & 2 TGCD
6 CYBERBALL ARCADE
7 W.S. BASEBALL SS
8 MUHAMMAD ALI BOXING SG
9 SILENT HILL PS
10 TREASURES O.T. DEEP PS



b. siechler



1 R-TYPE DELTA PS
2 READY 2 RUMBLE DC
3 LUNAR: SSSC PS
4 EPISODE ONE: RACER N64
5 QUAKE II N64
6 DRIVER PS
7 SF ZERO 3 PS
8 RESIDENT EVIL PS
9 CRASH BANDICOOT PS
10 MARIO KART 64 N64



e. sear



1 NEED FOR SPEED: HS PS
2 KING OF FIGHTERS R2 N64
3 MEDIEVIL PS
4 SUPER MARIO BROS. DX GBC
5 QUAKE 3 PC&MAC
6 READY TO RUMBLE DC
7 GRAN TURISMO PS
8 RRT4 PS
9 HOT SHOTS GOLF PS
10 MOTO RACER 2 PS



m. hobbs



1 R-TYPE DELTA PS
2 OMEGA BOOST PS
3 EPISODE ONE: RACER N64
4 DRIVER PS
5 SEGA RALLY 2 DC
6 POWER STONE DC
7 RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 PS
8 COLIN McRAE RALLY PS
9 SF ZERO 3 PS
10 SUPER MARIO BROS 3 NES



b. elmquist



1 HYDRO THUNDER ARCADE
2 METAL GEAR SOLID PS
3 STREET FIGHTER 2 ARCADE
4 GOLDENEYE 007 N64
5 S.F. ZERO 2 ARCADE
6 TUROK 2 N64
7 FINAL FANTASY 2 SNES
8 FINAL FANTASY VII PS
9 BARD'S TALE 2 C64
10 MIGHT & MAGIC 2 C64



e. pratte



1 EVERQUEST PC
2 BUST A MOVE 2 PS
3 UNREAL PC
4 OMEGA BOOST PS
5 QUAKE 2 PC
6 POWER STONE DC
7 STRIDER MAME
8 VAMPIRE SAVIOR SS
9 REQUIEM PC
10 POPULOUS 2 PC



m. griffin



1 EVERQUEST PC
2 POWER STONE DC
3 SOUL CALIBUR DC
4 SPROCKET N64
5 SPEED DEVILS DC
6 NFL FOOTBALL DC
7 V8- SECOND OFFENSE ALL
8 SONIC ADVENTURE DC
9 QUAKE 3 MAC&PC
10 METAL SLUG F.M. NGPC

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for topics you'd like to see covered, please email techfront@gamersrepublic.com.

CONSOLE MODEMS HIT THE MAINSTREAM ▼



Sega's announcement at the E3 that the Dreamcast will in fact include a modem in the United States has ushered in the era of mainstream console network gaming.

Many console gamers have probably never played a game over a modem before, and this month we'll fill you in on what you should and shouldn't expect from modem gaming, and why.

Anyone who plays fighting games understands just how important multiplayer play can be to keep a game exciting, even a year or more after its release. The competitive edge, real human intelligence, and knowledge that you're not facing an opponent who can cheat the system (at least in console games; cheating is a huge problem in PC networked games)

ascribe this to laziness on Sega's part for not having all the right network drivers ready, or on the part of developers for not wanting to put in the extra effort (and you would probably be right to some extent), it's no coincidence that the first four network games announced for the Dreamcast are Rally 2, Baldur's Gate, Frontier, and Slave Zero: 2 RPGs, a racing game, and a 3D action shooter. You might note that despite a very strong lineup of fighting games, including Virtua Fighter 3, Soul Calibur, and Marvel vs. Capcom, not one fighting game has been announced as being playable via modem.

This is no coincidence: while regular controllers provide input that is for all practical purposes instantaneous, trying to coordinate game information over a modem is a much trickier business. The most relevant statistic is the 'ping time', measured as the amount of time it takes for a given piece of data to get from one computer to another, and for the second computer to respond back to the first. Ping times are typically measured in milliseconds; to give an idea of the kinds of time involved, pings across a local high-speed network (like what is typically found in an office or college) generally take from 1 to 10 milliseconds, pings from one side of the country to the other take around 100 milliseconds (assuming both are connected directly to the internet via high-speed connections), and pings between



county from one another, it would take several frames of action just for one player's controller motion to reach the other player's console, and the timing would likely be thrown off to a significant enough extent that the flow would be ruined for expert players. Play over the modem, and the lag would be several times worse.

Now, clearly this is not going to be a problem for RPGs and other games that don't rely on high-speed action. It is more of a challenge for action-oriented games like Rally 2 or Slave Zero, but even in these cases there is a lot

TECHFRONT BY BRIAN OSSERMAN

can keep a gameplay experience fresh almost indefinitely. However, you'll notice very quickly that not all games with multiplayer play will also support network play. Although you may

two computers connected to the internet via modem can get into the 1000 millisecond (i.e., one second) range. To put this in perspective, suppose Sega wanted to make a version of Virtua Fighter 3 with modem play. VF3 runs at 60 frames per second, and as anyone who's spent much time playing it knows, the timing matters down to the individual frame. Now, if a frame is drawn 60 times a second, that means that there are about 17 milliseconds between one frame and the next. Completely ignoring everything else that has to be done during this time, this would make it plausible to play VF3 over a local high-speed network without appreciable lag, but even if both consoles had direct, high-speed connections to the internet, if they were trying to play across the

more flexibility than there would be for a fighting game. In Rally's case, the reason for this is that even though the game moves quickly and relies on precise controls, what is most important is the car's interaction with the track, and not with opponents' cars. While it is possible that lag might cause some contact between cars where there shouldn't have been (and this is where the programming challenge comes in), even if this occurs it will only be a slight annoyance, and not undermine the entire experience. In a fighting game, all that matters is the character-character interaction, so any lag is a much more serious problem. While it's not inconceivable that a company may take a shot at a modem fighting game, don't expect to see any games requiring this degree of timing in the near future, or at the least don't expect them to play as well as they do in person.



Great Fighters are Made not Born!

It's here, Fighter Maker, the total 3D fighting game! Now you can get your hands on everything you've ever wanted in a fighting game— one or two player 3D fighting action, an incredible arsenal of more than 800 moves, AND professional-quality design tools that let **YOU** create **YOUR** perfect fighter. Fighter Maker puts you in total control of every frame of animation, movement, and camera angle as you design your custom fighter from wireframe to unstoppable fighting machine. When you think you're ready, save your creation to a memory card and Kick Ass!



Includes 20 fighters ready for combat in 10 exotic locations



Edit or use any of 800 moves, throws, and juggle combos, or invent something new



Test mode fine tunes your moves for maximum damage



Create ANY move you can think of, complete with sound and visual effects

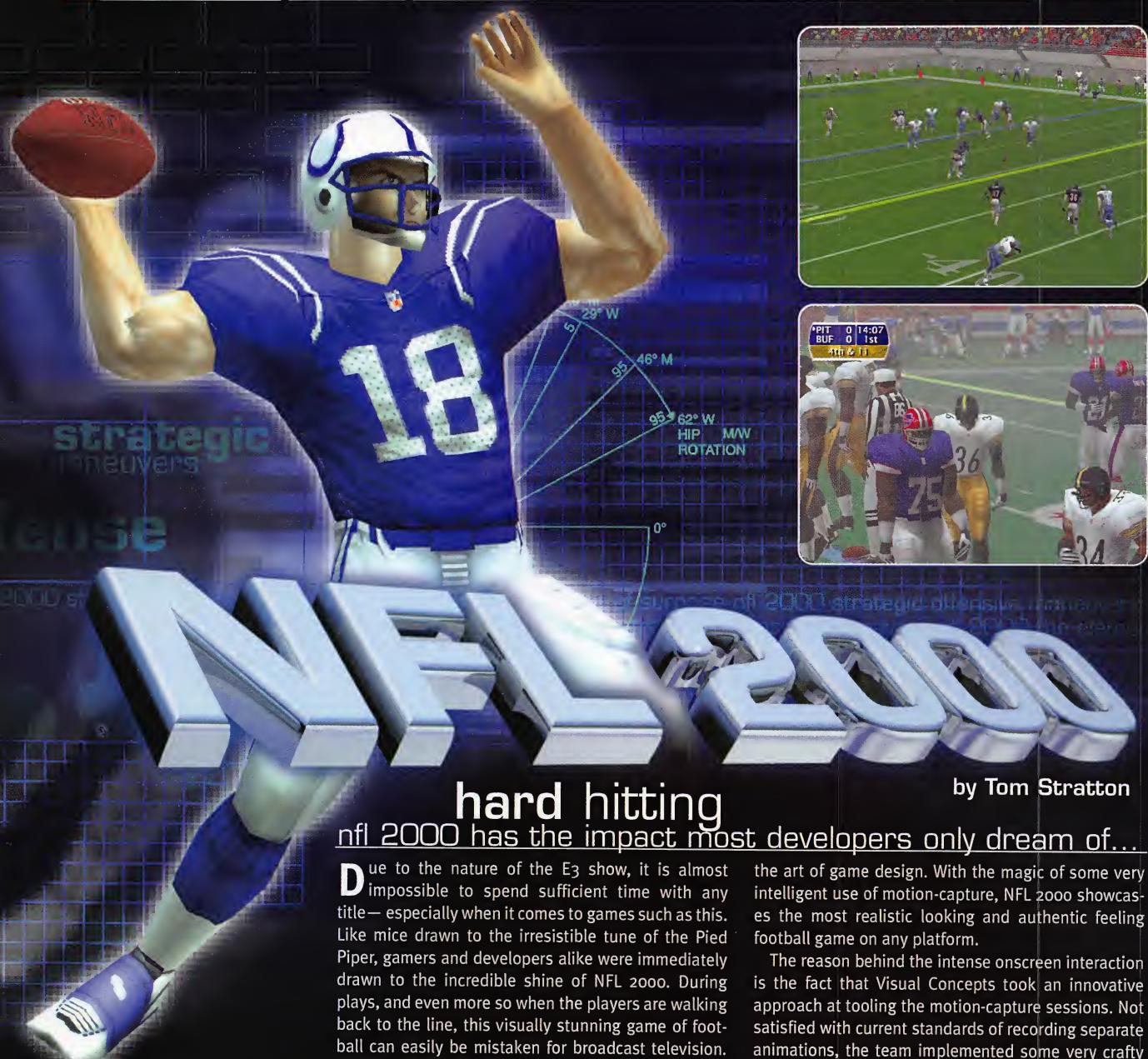


...a landmark title in the console market.

-Next Generation

agetec





by Tom Stratton

hard hitting

nfl 2000 has the impact most developers only dream of...

Due to the nature of the E3 show, it is almost impossible to spend sufficient time with any title—especially when it comes to games such as this. Like mice drawn to the irresistible tune of the Pied Piper, gamers and developers alike were immediately drawn to the incredible shine of NFL 2000. During plays, and even more so when the players are walking back to the line, this visually stunning game of football can easily be mistaken for broadcast television. Those lucky (and patient) enough to wait their turn to play were treated to a game just as technically deep as it is astounding to look at. Fortunately, I was at the show an hour early each day and got to undergo an intimate and uninterrupted parley with the game; these sessions were followed by mid-day fixes as well.

Visual Concepts, responsible for Madden '94 and '95 for the Genesis, NBA Action '98 for the Saturn and even One for the PlayStation (these guys are not your run-of-the-mill developers), know a whole lot about

the art of game design. With the magic of some very intelligent use of motion-capture, NFL 2000 showcases the most realistic looking and authentic feeling football game on any platform.

The reason behind the intense onscreen interaction is the fact that Visual Concepts took an innovative approach at tooling the motion-capture sessions. Not satisfied with current standards of recording separate animations, the team implemented some very crafty two-man motion capturing. This grounds every aspect of the game in exceptional realism: different sized players will move uniquely and not stretch from their real-life abilities. Where games to date have the same tackle looped into any contact situation, NFL 2000 players will react depending on where they are hit. As well, when the players collide after the snap, linemen will lose or gain ground, and you can immediately see the difference of using the new motion-capture techniques.





stunning visuals

Another technical feat is the eerie adeptness of the AI. The computer will read and identify play calls, making split-second adjustments. All of the player inclinations are brought to life with the use of hours of videotape footage and research. If a receiver runs a short route, the man covering him will hurry to cut to the inside and then, if the receiver is going out long, run to the outside. The defensive back will even know when to turn around, get in the way, and tip the ball. The physics of the ball are even in the game, as it takes odd bounces and unpredictable spins in every direction.

Mismanagement of play mechanics is often crippled by a staggering FPS. With the unruffled stream of the game's 60-fps, the smallest nudge on the analog pad will instantly cause a reaction; the most realistic motions ever set provide the pace of a true football game. Even those accustomed to the brisk nature of simple arcade-style football are going to appreciate the authentic characteristics equipped for this title. Standing at 70 percent complete, NFL 2000 controls extremely well, providing unparalleled player manipulation.

The game will support online use, but not in the form of Network play. I know—and believe me, they do too—it would have put the extra inch in their foot-long, so expect to see it in next year's update. Guaranteed. But for NFL 2000, the Internet will be utilized instead, so players can download new play rosters, saves and teams to the VMU. By displaying a basic representation of the playbook onscreen, the VMU will also allow players to choose plays unbeknownst to their opponents, which adds a tremendous amount of strategy and surprise to the game.

NFL 2000 is an essential part of Sega's return to the console market. Having the game on store shelves September 9 will be crucial to fulfilling the pledge Sega have made to their allegiant following and doubly to those who feel they were pushed to break faith. NFL 2000 enjoyed an extremely positive reception at E3, and with the anticipated perfecting of the game in its final weeks of development, Sega's vision may finally be restored.

>those lucky enough to wait their turn to play
>were treated to a game just as technically
>deep as it is visually astounding.





THE FIRST TIME YOU SEE NFL 2000 RUNNING ON THE DREAMCAST YOU'LL KNOW WHY WE PUT A SPORTS GAME ON THE COVER. WHEN BERNIE SAID "SEGA SPORTS IS BACK," HE WASN'T KIDDING. ALTHOUGH PRESSED FOR TIME, WITH US GOING TO PRESS JUST DAYS AFTER THE MAYHEM OF E3, VISUAL CONCEPTS WAS KIND ENOUGH TO SET ASIDE SOME TIME AND ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW THIS AMAZING TITLE CAME TO FRUITION...

AN INTERVIEW WITH...

GREG THOMAS & TRACY JOHNSON

V.P., PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, SEGA
PRODUCER, SEGA SPORTS

GR: For the NFL and the NBA games lined up for the Dreamcast, what were your inspirations for them?

GT: The NBA inspiration really is just about not being satisfied with what we made in the past with Action '98. A lot of what we were really looking forward to with the Dreamcast Basketball was improving the visuals. Then of course as soon as we get into the Dreamcast we start realizing there are a lot of things we can do. From a Football standpoint the inspiration is huge. We also always looked at Sega's sports line and were impressed by Joe Montana and Sports Talk, and it went away, or could have gone away, and we knew we had the chance to do it right. So starting from scratch, never having done our own AI, we started from the ground up, as good as we can, and that is where we are at.

GR: Then compared to the Saturn, how has the task of writing code for the Dreamcast been?

GT: We have been with the Dreamcast for a long time, since its inception basically. So we have been working on these titles for about 18 months. We love the Dreamcast. I think we even proved at E3 that hey, this machine is nothing to laugh about; this thing is technically really capable and I'll tell you right now that it is capable of a lot more than we are able to do at this time. We know that there is a lot of growth there and we specifically even know what some of that growth is today for next year, but we've got to keep our focus on getting this one done. It's a lot better than it has even been. [Laughs] The Saturn was multi-processors and down to the hardware level only, and trying to get the two processors in sync at all times and not knowing...it was just crazy. Dreamcast is really nice to work on.

GR: What tools were used for the player models?

GT: We use Alias here for all of our art. We have also written a lot of our own tools and a lot of our own Dreamcast viewers and animation tools. So we have written a lot of it ourselves. With new platforms, tools are always changing around you. New compilers and all that stuff are constantly changing with the birth of a new system. Those are things we need to deal with the birth of a new system.

GR: How many talents were used for the motion capturing?

TJ: Eight different people to do our motion capturing for NBA 2000, and they ranged from sizes of 5' 8" to 7' 1". We feel that doing so allowed us to come up with some very real and authentic motions for the different sized players. As far as pro athletes, we have Bo Outlaw of the Atlanta Magic and Tony Delk of the Warriors. We also have a current Harlem Globetrotter; his name is Roy Berg. One guy is a pro-am legend here in Oakland and San Francisco; his name is Hook. His adopted name is Wallee Abdur RaHeem, and he can do

things with the ball I have never seen before. We even have a Sega employee who came in and helped us out in a pinch.

GT: I would say upwards of sixteen on Football 2000. From a Football stand point the key there was getting a lot of the hits. So we had a whole stunt team. The other key was getting guys who knew how to move like they do in the NFL. The best way to do that is to have NFL players. So we had some of the 49ers provide some of that stuff.

GR: In speaking with David Perkinson (Producer of NFL 2000) at the show, I was told that there was some two-man motion capturing done for the football game.

GT: Yes, there definitely was.

GR: Is that a first in video game development?

GT: We had done some tests with one-person captures and we could not get the results that we wanted. Because we are scaling all of these players and getting everything lined up in the game, no matter what angle and what animation you are in became a difficult problem and just didn't look good. So you would have guys colliding and one guy bumping into the other, but you couldn't actually wrap around the guy. So we went into the studio and shot two-person tackles and worked our tail end off to get them in the game, and we did. It makes a huge difference. We don't believe that there is another game right now out in the market that's using two-person tackles.

GR: It is clearly noticeable.

GT: We were really shooting to have the collisions and tackles to be as realistic as we can and I think that so far we have gotten there. And there is so much more to go, wait until you see. We've got a lot of stuff in, but we don't have it all in and new animations are being put in every day.

GR: Speaking of the animations, how many are there or plan to be with the final product?

GT: Well it is basically how many can we fit in RAM. The plan is to have anywhere from 1600 to 1750, depending on where we end up with RAM. We have some really nice compression in the games and it lets us fit a lot in RAM – that's really important. We did our last basketball game for the Saturn (NBA Action '98), and we had like 210 in there and that was the most any other Basketball game ever had. Madden typically has about 175 or something. We are significantly more and that's why all these tackles and all these ambient animations you see is so important.

GR: How many polys per player?

GT: We switch out resolutions depending on where you are to the camera for performance. I think the highest football model is at 1400 polys and our highest basketball model is at 2000.



When you see it moving, then you will fully appreciate it. For now, just notice the detail on the field and in every corner of the stadium.



live broadcast

everything you see on television is in this game

GR: What about stadium research? It is often the last detail and least worried about.

GT: Oh man. Down to the finest detail! We sent photographers to each of the arenas to get the seating charts and what they look like, the color of the cushions, basically everything. If you play the game you will be able to tell that this is a different stadium, and not maybe two stadiums and putting new court floors down. With football it was very similar, getting it as accurate as we possibly can – even puts geometry and textures behind the stadium in case we want to switch to a blimp flyby.

GR: Finally as far as technical interests go, what's the status of Network play for the games?

GT: Next year. It will be the big one next year. We didn't exactly know where everything was going to be in time as far as the modem and the network and it is a lot of work to actually implement that into a game. So it will be a big deal for next year. The plan is to have Sega more online than offline.

GR: Okay, then, besides visually, what steps have the teams taken to enhance game play?

GT: Our number one goal has been to keep the games running at a constant 60 fps, which is very important. And we have achieved that. As we go forward we want to keep that; it is key because that is control. You know, you're moving the joystick, we can read you every 16th of a second. Other games are running at 15 to 20 fps and that's why it feels sluggish. What we haven't seen in other games is the receiver, defensive back relationship. For instance, if you call a Four Wide Out against a Nickel defense, the DB will come over and recognize that there is a four wide out and that he should relieve his position to help. Other players will shadow and move across their zones as well. I love it while we are in development and I find a problem that I don't like about the game play and I go over and talk about it to the engineer and he says, "Okay, let's go look at the tapes and see what really happens," as opposed to, "Let's fake this out or let's hack this in or whatever." The game is all about reality. We go through tons of tape and find what the timing is from the center snapping to the quarterback, then how fast the QB hands it off or how long the ball is in the air, and mimicked it all exactly.

GR: For both games, especially on NBA 2000, I noticed a very active sideline.

GT: Right.

GR: Most notable is in the NBA 2000, team coaches sort of stomping back and forth the courtside?

GT: You know, we are hoping to get the license to the coaches next, it hasn't become a done deal yet, but we hope we get it. We will be the only ones who actually have the actual coaches, and that's a big deal. Because then the next step is to apply the coach's tendencies and have them actually make calls and that kind of stuff.

GR: The players in NBA 2000 look uncanny.

TJ: We went through some extreme measures to get the finest details on screen. You will even see the tattoos on player's arms. The pinholes in the jerseys? You will be able to see them as well. Any and everything possible to make the game feel completely authentic.

GR: You weren't kidding when you said that it is key to have the game look as real as possible. You have definitely taken huge steps in creating that feeling. So what is the importance of having this game available for the system launch?

GT: From a football standpoint, hugely important. Absolutely having the game available on day one shows Sega's commitment to sports. It shows the first system to ship with a sports game and sports games are 40 percent of the market. So it is really, really important, and we won't miss it.

GR: If you are going to do it, you don't want to ship it until it is ready.

GT: Exactly. We feel really confident with both games, but we are not going to ship them until they are just right. In fact you should come up to give us some input and see what we have done since the show. It was amazing. There are always going to be some people, especially those on the net, that seem to rip our games apart. We got a lot of feedback both good and bad, and those comments are going to help us make a better game. That's also why I am telling you to come on up, we want feedback. We are so close to the game it is hard to...

GR: ...stand back and look at it from the outside.

GT: Exactly. You know I can complete passes constantly. I'm the man at completing passes. It's important that others can do it as well.

GR: So is Visual Concepts working on any other sports titles?

GT: No. We have an original game as well, that has not been shown yet and a fourth title that is in development but still very early. We don't want to be known as a sports developer, we do want to be known as the best sports developer.



GR: I definitely feel you are going to prove that come September.

GT: I sure hope so.

TJ: I think people are going to be very surprised at what Sega is going to pull out with their Basketball and Football titles. And I hope the consumers will give Sega another chance, because we have learned from our mistakes.

GR: That goes without saying. Thanks for your time, and we can't wait to play the final game!





shenmue

CHAPTER ONE



At the TGS, Yu Suzuki announced that Shenmue would be split into chapters. The first chapter is to be released on August 5, with chapter two sometime before Christmas. The reason for this is that the game has grown far too large to be just one game and he doesn't want to make everyone wait until it's completely finished before he releases it. As it stands, Chapter One will now be based solely in Japan, with

the Hong Kong and China locations not appearing until Chapter Two. Your adventure starts in Yokosuka, a small seaside city on the Miura Peninsula in Kanagawa Prefecture and just a short train journey south of Tokyo. As most people will not be familiar with Yokosuka and are unaware of what to expect there, we've prepared this special introduction to Shenmue Chapter 1: Yokosuka.

RYO'S HOME



The Yokosuka in Shenmue is set in 1986, so it still accurately portrays the nostalgic atmosphere of the traditional Japanese town. This is where Ryo Hazuki was raised and where he used to live with his father, Iwao Hazuki, in a large old house in the beautifully wooded suburbs outside the main city area. Although his father dies, Ryo continues to live here with Ine Hayata, the woman who does all the house cleaning and cooking, and Masayuki Fukuhara, one of his father's martial arts apprentices. This is your home base during the game and you can return here to eat, sleep, practice martial arts and do various other activities. Undoubtedly, there will be many clues to your father's mysterious death hidden around the house that you must search for.



Before his death, Iwao often practiced his unique style of Jujitsu in the back garden.



Next to the house is the martial arts gym where Ryo often trains with Masayuki.



WAREHOUSE



One of the most dangerous places in all of Yokosuka is certainly going to be the harbor area. Here you'll find some pretty sinister-looking dock workers. If you're not prepared for the worst, this shady bunch is ready and waiting to punch your lights out. Why it's necessary for you to visit here is not known yet, although unlike the friendly town area, you'll need to fight first and ask questions later. Painful.

Both the TGS and Network Jungle II had a QTE Battle demo where you could practice fighting the dock workers in the warehouse. Since many of them are foreigners, you can occasionally understand their Japanese-English sentences.



ae-3

The warehouse is full of boxes and barrels that are sent flying when you smash defeated opponents into them. When you're not fighting, you might want to examine their contents in case they contain something of value.





Dobuita Street, near the U.S. Naval Base in Yokosuka, is symbolic of the military presence here in the city. The street has numerous bars and clubs that cater mainly to U.S. military personnel, and this explains why there are so many non-Japanese characters in chapter one. During the day things may be quiet, but you'll need to beware of wandering drunks at night.



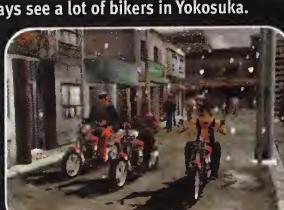
There are plenty of shops to visit and many people to talk to.



Visit the arcade and play games like Space Harrier or Excite QTE2.



Unless it starts to rain, you'll always see a lot of bikers in Yokosuka.



Cycling around the many Yokosuka streets will save you lots of time.



Be prepared for the heavy snow that comes at the end of January.



This is only one small part of Yokosuka city. If you leave Dobuita Street and head out of town, you'll find a large residential district with plenty of other interesting places to visit as well. Check back to our March and May issues for more pictures of Yokosuka.

One of your major enemies in Chapter One is Chai, a cunning, brutal and tenacious opponent whose ugly form intimidates all who see him. With his lightning-fast movement he can make sport of his rivals, and with his long arms he can accurately attack his enemies' vulnerable spots. These shots show him ambushing Ryo in the Yokosuka game center, but he also hangs out at the docks.



The warehouse is only one of the many places around the docks where you are free to explore, but as the docks are a long way from the town center, we recommend using your motor bike to get there. Whether you go during the day or night is up to you, but if you're planning on doing anything illegal, you'd be better off going at night; you need to be careful because Chai often lurks here in the darkness as well.



Even on the dockside you're under attack, but with the Free Battle system you can run around all the crates and make use of the space you have in order to fight your opponents more effectively.



Yokosuka should have over 10 hours of play time, but with the FREE aspect of Shenmue, you could easily spend many more hours playing without becoming bored. After finishing at Yokosuka, you'll then take a ship and head for Hong Kong where all your save data from Chapter One will be taken and used in Chapter Two.

YOKOSUKA

DOCKS



DYNAMITE DEKA

Originally known as Die Hard Arcade overseas (but known as Dynamite Deka in Japan, where Deka means detective), this game was first released in 1996 on Sega's ST-V arcade board. The simple but addictive 3D action proved to be a big hit and the over-the-top comedy excitement, as Mr. Dynamite blasted his way through a hi-tech building to rescue the hostages, was good enough for Sega to make an arcade sequel using the Model 2.

This time the action takes place on a luxury cruiser that has been hijacked by terrorists. You have to work your way around the ship, fighting them until you face the final boss and rescue the president's daughter. Depending on which mission you do, your approach to the liner is different (for example, by boat or by helicopter) and this then alters your route through the ship.

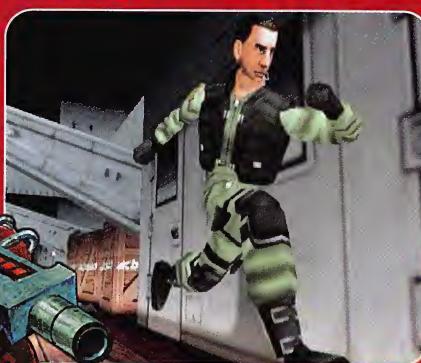
There are four stages and one mini-game in each mission, which are all on different places of the ship (for

example, upper deck, mid-ship or ship's hold). Of course, in each part of ship there are various rooms such as a casino, bar, swimming pool, and restaurant, so there's plenty of fun in replaying the game. In Mission 1, the final stage is on the ship, but in Mis-



the brutal model 2

sequel to die hard Arcade gets pumped up on dreamcast



sions 2 and 3, the final stage is set on a mysterious island!

Using eight-way control and three buttons (punch, kick and jump) Dynamite Cop allows you to move all around the screen freely to fight the enemy. When you're not punching and kicking, you can employ a wide variety of weapons against your enemies: either conventional (pistols, machine guns, or knives) or unconventional (chairs, spears, or bow and arrow). Just about everything you see in the game can be picked up and thrown. This includes a juke box, vending machine and other not-so-useful weapons such as sushi and potted plants! In addition, by moving close and "holding" your opponent, you can execute various special attacks, one of which is to arrest the enemy by fastening his hands behind his back with a pair of handcuffs! There are three characters—Bruno Delinger, Jean Ivy and Eddie Brown—each of which has his or her own set of special combination attacks that can be performed when powered up for extra fighting excitement.

Besides a complete overhaul of the graphics engine to raise the level of the visuals up to the Dreamcast's high standards, there are brand new opening and closing movies and a special illustration gallery as well.



TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE

After the success of the Tokyo Highway Battle series on the PlayStation, which sold nearly half a million copies in Japan, Genki have decided to bring back their acclaimed driving game for another spin on the roads. For those not familiar with Tokyo Highway Battle, the game differs from the typical racing game in many respects. Instead of the traditional race-course track, you have the highways of Tokyo, and your competitors aren't professional drivers but rivals who are out to prove who's the best racer on the streets.

The streets of Tokyo have over 150 of these rivals waiting for your challenge. You can search for them yourself or let them find you. The race begins when either you overtake them or they overtake you, although if you use your rear view mirror carefully you can spot them in advance and block them first. Because there are no set courses in the game, whether you win or lose is decided by the Split Point (SP) parameter. When the race starts, you and your rival have a full SP bar; however, the car behind continues to lose SP until it reaches zero and loses. The farther a car is trailing, the faster its SP is reduced. The only way to prevent this is to overtake your rival and thus try to force his SP down. You can pull out of a race at any time by going down a different road, which then results in a draw.



**the dark streets of tokyo become
the proving grounds for over 150 rival competitors**



There are four basic game modes. In Practice, you drive your car on any course you wish; VS Battle lets you race against another player in split-screen mode; and with Quick Race you can race without worrying about various options or set up. However, the main mode is Quest Mode, where you can build up your car and customize it to suit your tastes.

Instead of money, you use Credit Points (CP), which are calculated from the remaining SP you have when you win a race. With this CP you can purchase new parts or upgrade your car to improve your racing chances. There are over 20 types of cars and over 100 car parts, which cost varying amounts of CP. In addition, you can change the color of your car by playing with an RGB palette or create your own personalized number plate. There are two levels of car tuning, one for beginners and one for car maniacs. The easy level carefully explains the effect of the various parts and uses a simplified system for tuning your car, which corresponds to the stage you're playing on. The advanced level is fairly complex, with detailed tuning parameters that allow you to alter every aspect of your car's performance.





There are six types of:

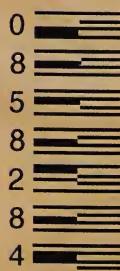
1. Direct signs should be located above the barrier and be visible directly or indirectly by the user.
2. Indirect signs are a device to indicate a warning or danger.
3. Delayed signs are located above the barrier and are activated by the user.
4. Supplementary signs are placed near the sign to provide additional information.
5. Feedback signs are located near the barrier and are activated by the user.
6. Hard signs are located near the barrier and are activated by the user.

Avoid projections, tripping hazards, and low-hanging obstructions.
Add audible signs to visible signs.
Hard surfaces aid sound detection.



KOLDEIKA

In what is one of the most intriguing premises to a game on PS, this beautifully dark gothic horror RPG strives to break new ground



Neat the sea cliffs of Aberystwyth, Wales, lies the desolate Nemeton Monastery whose history is as long as it is sinister. In the 9th century it was just a simple lodging for traveling pilgrims, but in the 13th century it was rebuilt as a large gothic church with library, bell tower and kitchen; it even had an execution chamber in the northern building. When newer buildings were added these were then all enclosed together behind a large outer wall. However, even before laws banning the existence of such religious orders were created in the 16th century, this monastery had already been abandoned and in the 17th century it was instead used

to imprison and execute prisoners who had committed political crimes. Even now, it is said that there are hidden underground jails. Little by little the number the people brought here declined and the place eventually fell into ruins. At one point a rich family bought the monastery and moved there, but they suddenly disappeared without a trace and various frightening rumors began to spread about this dark dwelling.

Now it's the night of Monday, October 31, 1898, and three new visitors approach: Koldeka Lasant, a 19 year old Welsh gypsy girl who's been cursed with extraordinary powers as a



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psychic medium; Edward Plunkett, a 20 year old Englishman who abandoned his rich and distinguished family to see the world; and James O'Flaherty, a 53 year old Catholic priest from Ireland who's well versed in physics, history and the occult. All of them have their own private reason for coming to the monastery, but eventually they team up to confront the evil that lurks here.

Koldelka is a gothic horror RPG where your three-man party explores a ruined monastery over one cold dark night. There are numerous special items and equipment lying around to help you get past the deadly traps and

defeat the powerful monsters that you must confront in order to solve all the puzzles and unlock the game's final mystery. Just like Resident Evil, all the scenes are pre-rendered and you have full freedom to move around them at will. In each map area there is a variety of set events, but depending on your progress through the game and your characters' actions, the event you trigger will change.

The battle system is still under development, but we know it'll be turn based with some of your characters being able to use magic. From what we've seen, Koldelka will have some psychic attack abilities, although Edward likes to use his shotgun. Monsters range from the typical gargoyle, skeleton and wolf to some pretty weird creatures.

Overall, the game's gothic horror atmosphere has been perfectly captured with beautifully designed areas and awesome looking CG movies. If the game plays half as well as it looks, this will certainly be one of the biggest PlayStation games of 1999.



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Koldelka

0.625-2" (16-50mm)



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gamers' republic

electronic entertainment expo

Another E3 has come and gone. This one was a snap compared to the swampy Atlanta versions, and featured three healthy consoles to boot, along with the usual dose of PC and handheld bliss, made all the sweeter by new Voodoo technology, the GameBoy Color and its new competition, the NeoGeo Pocket Color. While the consensus on the show floor was that no one game stood out as revolutionary, it was unanimous that existing genres were looking better than ever, especially with the advent of new technology like the Dreamcast, and soon the PlayStation 2 and Nintendo Dolphin (?). The world of video games is an extremely healthy one that is ever evolving, striving to provide the end user with the absolute best product imaginable. And while every game can't be an A title, it seems that companies are trying harder than ever to produce quality software. As good as this show was, I predict that 2000's will be even better, for obvious reasons...



ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO ELECTRONIC ENT

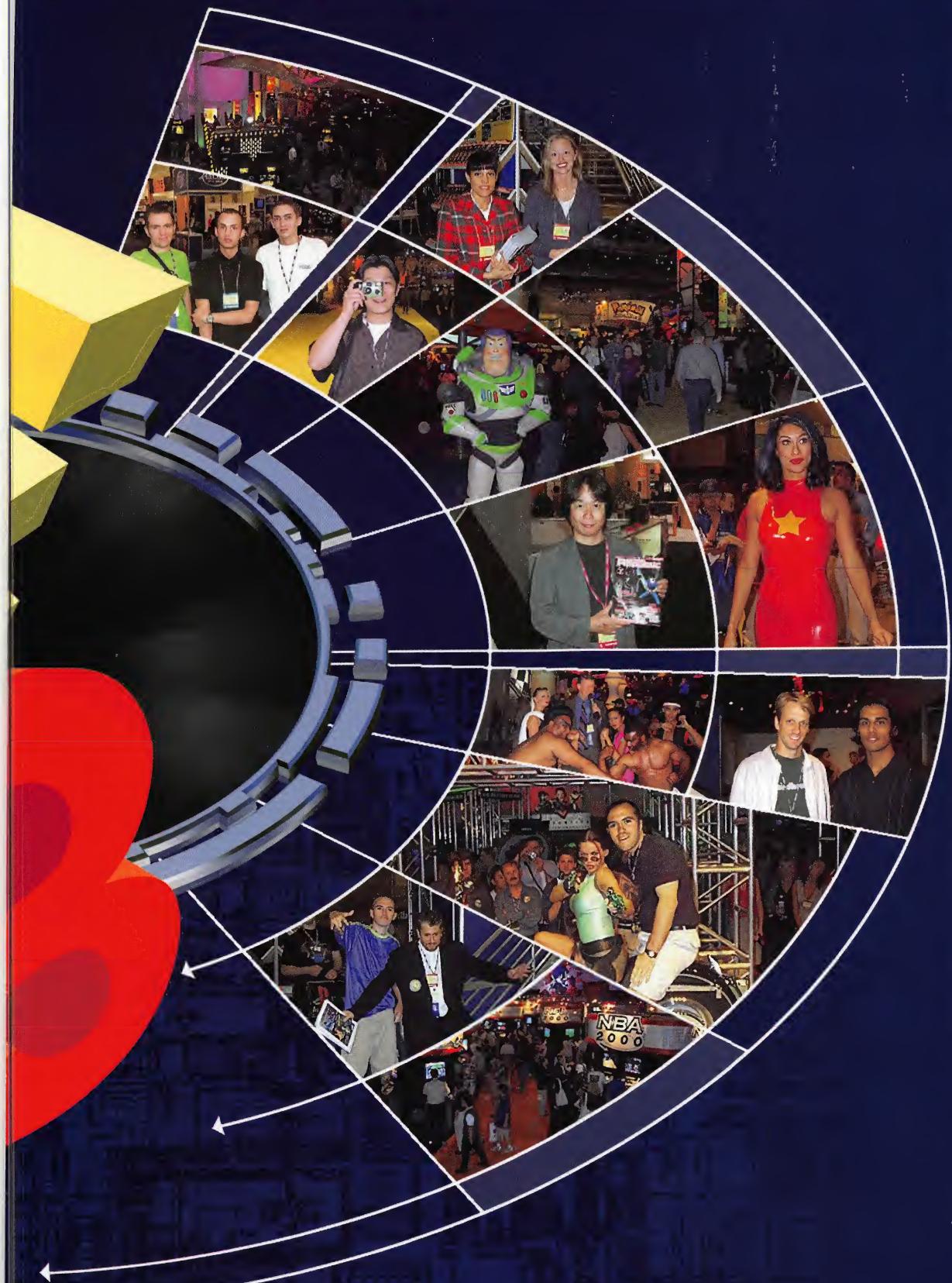


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ACCLAIM coming on strong...



Coming off the success of *Turok 2*, *Jeremy McGrath*, and the good ol' *WWF*, Acclaim looks set for an even better year end with some power titles on the way: *Shadow Man* for the N64 and PC, *Machines* (D) for PC, *Re-Volt* (E) for the PlayStation and the big news, *Trickstyle* (A-C), a friggin' awesome-lookin'

futuristic hoverboard game for the Dreamcast. Acclaim also has an extensive sports lineup you'll want to catch in our E3 sports section dead ahead. The question is, will *Turok* rock on the Dreamcast? Hmm.

AGETECH the new ascii



Dipping into the import scene, Agetech's most impressive acquisition was the intense shooter *R-Type Delta* (H-I), a visually exquisite 32-bit update of the popular 8- and 16-bit series. The gameplay stands out with its unique use of pods that act as shields and jettisoned weapons. • Agetech's other strong push was *Rising Zen* (G), a spaghetti-Western-inspired action and adventure game from the makers of *Cool Boarders*.

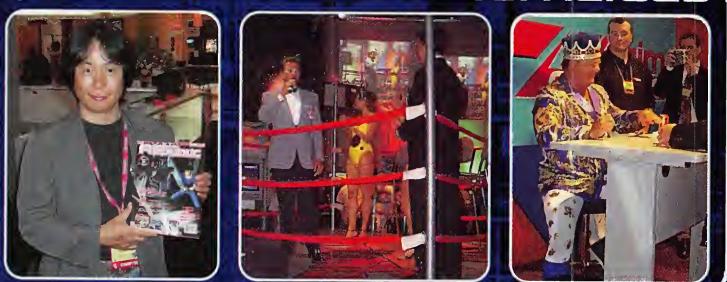
ATLUS MAKEN THE DC

One of the more interesting games for the Dreamcast was *Maken-X* (J, K), a supremely stylized first-person action title in which the player, assuming the spirit of a sword, must possess various characters in the game to progress through the dark, impressive environments. • Embracing the sunnier side of gaming was the delightful *Tail Concerto* (L), a character-driven 3D platformer that is full of enjoyable play mechanics and endearing style. • Closing in on an American release was the promising Japanese RPG *Thousand Arms* (M), which uncharacteristically uses anime-style sprites in 3D worlds.



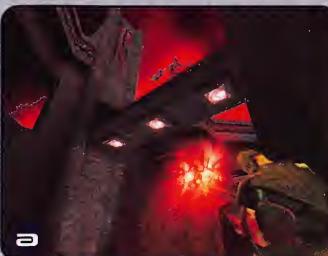
INSIDE E3 (1) hangin' in the halls with our heroes

Miyamoto... Steven Spielberg... Michael Buffer... Jeremy McGrath... Yuji Naka... Shinigaki... Jerry Lawler... Randall Cunningham... Jake Lloyd... Goldberg... Kenji Eno... and many more celebrities basked in the glory of the second E3 held in Los Angeles, and we stuck GR stickers on all of their backs! Hey, they wouldn't stick in Atlanta. No, we didn't, but it did cross our minds...



ACTIVISION got sequels?

The Quake series has garnered a cult status amongst its players, and for Quake III (A) to be anything less than stellar would, of course, be unforgivable. It would seem that this third installment in the finest multiplayer FPS game on the PC continues the fierce tradition. • Quake III will no doubt be a huge success, but for RPG gamers, the oppressively dark Vampire: The Masquerade (K) is the title to get excited about. Traditional action RPG elements set in an intriguing world of 3D gloom underscore this richly atmospheric quest through medieval Prague. • The ambitious use of the Star Trek license is giving Activision three shots at cracking the tradition of inept movie-to-game transla-



tions: Star Trek Voyager (F), a visually superb FPS title; Star Trek Armada (B), the first RTS game set in the depths of space; and Next Generation, a first-person action/adventure. • In an inquisitive change of hands, Blue Stinger (L) has

now been bestowed upon Activision. Their other strong Dreamcast title, Vigilante 8, was barely out of the pupas stage, as was the PS fighter X-Men (G). • While only on video, the provocative sneak peak at Tenchi 2 (C) was more than enough to warrant heavy anticipation. • Toy Story 2 (I) incorporates elements from the upcoming film as well as Pixar computer-generated animations.

ASC picks a winner for tnn

OK, so ASC wasn't at the show. Buggy Heat—which now falls under the label TNN Hardcore Heat—was, and it looked amazing. Playing over at the busy Sega arena on too few screens, it was one of the hardest games to get a crack at, although it's still not 100% finished. Most notable are the game's physics (deep suspension keeps it real) and unbelievably crispy replays in which you can see every detail on the driver's face. We hope to have a previewable version of Heat for the August issue.



...girls, girls, girls she's a man, baby! INSIDE e3 (2)



And our favorite part of any E3... the girls. Not shown, the Ready 2 Rumble babes looked too good for words, although these hard working lassies ain't too shabby! These girls endure all manner of carnage at these shows and our hats (and undies if need be) go off to them. Here's to you, girls!



BANDAI vampires, mechs & bombs



Somewhat of a departure for Bandai, Countdown Vampires (C) is reminiscent of Resident Evil. The game is still relatively early but looks bloody cool nevertheless.

Bandai's PlayStation offerings for '99 are shaping up very nicely. Silent Bomber (A) especially looks and plays extremely well and is the closest to completion of the bunch. Don't underestimate Macross VFX 2 (B) though, which will no doubt capture the PlayStation/anime crossover contingent.



BUNGIE it's not about jumping



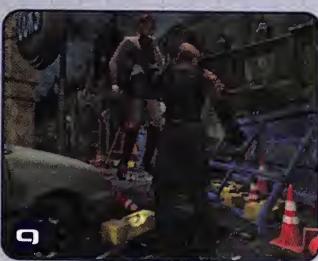
Oni, Bungie's only title showcased at the show, is a third-person action/adventure in which the player employs complex hand-to-hand moves and weapons fire to dispose of the hundreds of individual foes. Set in gritty, anime-inspired 2032 AD, the game has you assuming the role of elite agent Konoko, who is attempting to infiltrate a sinister crime syndicate. Oni's 3D engine looked nice, with ultra-detailed levels deftly suiting the pseudo-anime artistic style. (D,E)



CAPCOM not all evil



Appearing in video form only, Resident Evil Code: Veronica (H) was presented as a montage of striking real-time images that displayed Capcom's dedication to brooding atmosphere and dynamic cinematic presentation. In one standout scene, a huge spider crawled across the screen in the immediate foreground, showing off Capcom's keen sense of masterfully setting up a scene to toy with the player's emotions. Impressive in their own rights were Resident Evil 3 (G) and the RE-inspired Dino Crisis (I,J), with its real-time backdrops and awesome dinosaurs. The scrutinized Strider may have looked a bit flat and Alpha 3 (K) on Dreamcast was decidedly PS-looking, but for the category of new and original, the action/adventure of Trombone (L), from the makers of MM Legends, showed promise.



INSIDE E3 (3) many mascots milled about...

That big ol' Q-Bert needs a Gamers' Republic sticker slapped on him...

Many a mascot made the show this year. Dedicated men and women willing to either sweat like a pig on a stick inside a suit like the one to the right or show some skin and hope the rash doesn't come back. Then again, you could just dress as Satan and freak people out.



CRAVE what you do to genki games

There were enough racing games on display for the Dreamcast to last the life of the system, and the most impressive of the crowded bunch was the smooth, nicely lit street racing of Tokyo Highway Battle (A,B). • Also for the Dreamcast was Blades of Vengeance (E), an ambitious adventure game in which swordplay and magic are the focus of the gameplay. • The



PlayStation will soon be getting the ethereal Japanese RPG Jade Cocoon (C), and Gex 3 (F) is on the way to N64. • A unique combination of real-time strategy and first-person shooting marked Battle Zone 64 (D), in which the player handles the firepower of over 30 hover tanks.

DISNEY no mouse here...



One of the standouts at the show for gamers who love the old-school of design was Tarzan (G, H, I), a beautiful 2.5-D platformer that incorporates all the classic elements of 2D gaming and

underpins them with a plush polygonal backdrop of jungles teeming with creatures of the wild. Harkening back to the cherished Virgin titles of 16-bit, Tarzan has certainly caught our eye.

EIDOS more than Lara

Inspired by such greats as Chrono Trigger and Final Fantasy, the designers of Anachronox (J) manage to capture the soaring spirit of those console RPG classics in their heavily atmospheric and visually excit-

ing RPG for PC. • About the only thing left to say about the perpetually delayed Daikatana (K) is that it looks good and will be done when John Romero says it's done. • Designed by Warren Spector of Ultima fame, the crumbling future in Deus Ex (L)



pikachu just scares me.. hey jeremy.. rayman!.. spies!.. buzz



EIDOS and the hits just keep on comin'



is given dark form by the amazing Unreal engine. • Darkness spirals into the depths of evil in Soul Reaver (E, F), the Legacy of Kain sequel that is finally starting to take final shape. • For all its inadequacies, Fighting Force apparently had enough promising aspects under the surface to be culled for the sequel, Fighting Force 2 (C, D). A new, high-res engine will house more extensive level interaction, outfit and equipment changes, deeper gameplay and enemies that react to critical impact points.

• So many E3 games leave their mark from visual impact, which is why a game like anime-inspired Fear Factor is immediately intriguing. Its dusky, Blade Runner-like vision of Hong Kong is given cinematic texture with backgrounds that are widely animated FMV sequences. • Striving to break new grounds on the PC is the equally atmospheric RPG Revenant (A), which imbues its rich fantasy with 3D lighting and 65,000 colors. The gritty Urban Chaos (B) and provocative Omikron (G) represented the other key PC titles.



EA the devil returns

EA had a number of strong titles on display, but their standout project was the wickedly atmospheric Dungeon Keeper 2 (M), which takes what made the first a success and adds burning 3D. • Road Rash 2000 (L) continues the gritty bike-brawling tradition, offering a cool 2-player-cooperative side-car mode,

12 weapons and enhanced physics. •

Using a ninja and geisha force well into the 1000s, epic battles in the heart of Japan are waged in Shogun (P). • For extreme snowmobiling through alpine terrain, Sled Storm (N) captures the intense new sport of SnoCross. • The predictable but engaging action of Tomorrow Never Dies (Q) and the dinosaur brawling of War Path (O).



INSIDE E3 (4) he with the most toys...

E3 is famous for its cool freebies. The big three always deliver the goods, although this year I must say the pickins were somewhat slim outside of Sony, who furnished cool PS carrying cases packed with a PS pullover and Ape Escape toys to all who ventured behind the scenes. Sega had a great press kit and Nintendo gave out a cool shoulder bag. Sandra from Ubi Soft was kind enough to send us home with an Ed of our own. Thanks!



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FOX INTERACTIVE

With its superb engine and appealing premise, Alien Resurrection (A) was the highlight of the Fox lineup. The game features 10 levels of furious 3rd-person action, with nine weapon types to utilize and a handful of selectable characters from the movie to interact with. Somewhat old news but cool nevertheless was the colorful Croc 2 (B), but the prospect of an even better

version of Die Hard Trilogy in the form of the forthcoming sequel was a bit more to our liking. Set in Las Vegas, Die Hard Trilogy 2 (C) continues with the same mechanics and three separate engine types as in the first game. Continuing with the movie-licensing, Fox also had Planet of the Apes (D), an adventure game featuring puzzles along with hand-to-hand combat.



GT INTERACTIVE



Being able to sit down in a quiet, air-conditioned room, far detached from the crushing show scene was treat enough, but having Unreal Tournament (G) for the entertainment was the finishing touch. Any devoted FPS gamer will be thrilled to see the great single-player game make the transition into multi-

play by adding features like in-depth stat tracking, several distinct maps and various team battles. • The irascible Duke Nukem is taking his acidic attitude to the N64 in Duke Nukem: Zero Hour (M). • GT's other big console title for '99 is Driver (L), the destructive driving game punctuated by great physics and huge cityscapes. • Critically acclaimed author Robert Jordan's novels are manifested in the promising Wheel of Time (I), and 80 alien planets become the battle grounds in Imperium Galactica 2 (H,I). For 2-player cooperative play, check out the surreal adventures of 40 Winks (E, F), and for what could be the pinnacle of multiplayer RTS, Total Annihilation Kingdoms (K) is the one to watch for.



INSIDE E3 (5) the parties, bigger, badder, louder

There's nothing worse than an E3 hangover. The prospect of talking to hundreds of people while baking under hot lights half intoxicated...well, you can't imagine. Neither can I, because the E3 was in LA, so I was able to resist the tempting invites knowing the cozy comfort of home was but an hour away. Of course, most of the staff did peruse the LA night life, taking part in such open bar shindigs as the Sony soiree which featured no less than Beck himself, Nintendo which featured Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, and Eidos, who entertained the swaying masses with Everclear. Psygnosis went all out and had their party at Hef's place! Yikes! There goes the G-Police budget! If you ever attend an E3, play a little game with your friends and see if you can spot the hangovers. A tell-tale sign: sweaty brow. A little tip from uncle Storm: drinking messes up your platforming skills. I don't go near the stuff!



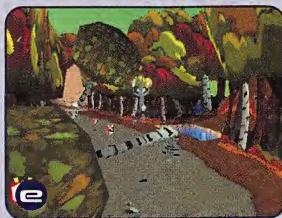
HASBRO Old school meets new



When we beg for a return to the classics, we are primarily referring to Metroids, Contras and Ghouls N' Ghosts, but we're more than willing to open that list up to those early '80s Atari classics. Fitted in polygonal dress, Q-Bert (B), Pong (C) and Missile Command (D) are merging a 32-bit sheen

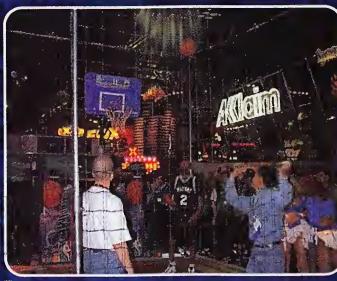
with play mechanics that mimic the original games – a safe bet for success. Other indelibles such as Centipede and Pac Man completed the classics stable. • For a switch into the new, more bizarre generation of gaming, Glover (A) represented a unique 3D action and adventure with a hand as the protagonist.

INFOGAMES



Cool Boarders 3 was already displaying huge potential on Dreamcast, but it will not be without competition as Supreme Snowboarding (H) tries to take the simulation of this extreme sport one step higher. • For the sports experience on PlayStation, Brasil V-Soccer (I) enters the soccer market by concentrating on unparalleled realism in the players and gameplay, while building the atmosphere of the game with lively commentary, music and crowd noise. • Loony Tunes characters are making their starring debut in 3D action/adventure: Bugs Bunny in Bugs Bunny Lost in Time (E), and Donald Duck in Duck Dodgers (F). • Using a marriage of story and action, Eagle One is an arcade jet combat title in which the player battles over five islands in multiple flying modes (G). • Being developed for both PC and Dreamcast, Slave Zero (I) is a mech shooter that puts you in crowded city streets for maximum carnage.

capcom rocks! he shouted... and shouted. go count pikas!





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INFOGRAMES



Continuing on, V-rally 2 (A, B) is set to take the off-road racing world by storm across nearly every platform. Having played both the PC and Nintendo 64 versions we can safely say that VR 2 will live up to the hype. Insider, (C) a stealthy adventure, is early but looks really interesting. As for Outcast (D), here's a Dreamcast and PC offering that holds great promise if Fox can get the frame rate to agree with the voxel technology. Taz Express (E, F) involves Taz as a postal worker. Why? Beats me, but the game (for N64) looks really cool. We hope to preview it for you very soon.

INTERPLAY

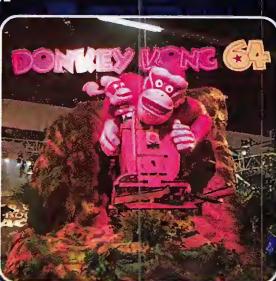


Making our way to the shows concourse area, entering the black-draped hollow that was Shiny and Planet Moon, two of the show's best games were being demonstrated by members of their respective (and respected) teams. I am elated to report first that Shiny's most ambitious game yet, Messiah (I, N), is beginning to take shape and it is going to be a benchmark title. Shown on PC, I pray DP lets it fly on the Dreamcast. I'm sure the PS game will rock, and I know the PC game does, but I need a controller in hand (and not a PC one) when Messiah blesses us later this year. Wait 'til you see the intro on this one. • Equally mind altering, Planet Moon's Giants (J, K) is set to exceed all expectations. Aside from some of the coolest themes you've ever imagined, dealing with food supplies, sniping, brut force, and so many other elements you could write a book on them alone, the universe is beyond cool. Titus must be jazzed. They acquired a hefty chunk of Interplay, making the announcement just prior to show time. Another super-company is forming. MDK 2 for DC (G) just missed being shown. Drag.



INSIDE E3 (6) nintendo style in effect!

Nintendo doesn't build a booth, they create a mini world. So does Sony, but we got more pictures of Nintendo! This year they pulled out all the stops. the Star Wars figures alone, like a full sized pod racer caused one to drool uncontrollably. Beyond the pod was a walk in Star Wars area that was beyond cool. DK, Perfect Dark and of course Pokemon were represented as well. Too much yellow!



JALECO jaleco's ship comes in

Jaleco had their Dreamcast-bound survival horror game, Carrier. It was cool to finally see the game in action after so many screenshots and so much hype. An interesting note here is that Carrier relies on fixed cameras, in the vein of Blue Stinger, as opposed to a look camera (Shenmue) or an L & R rotating camera. Otherwise, it has good carnage, but slightly stiff controls.



KEMCO goes racing and fps!

Kemco's promising version of Ion Storm's (by renowned Quake-o-ologist John Romero) Daikatana, was on display and looked very promising. Top Gear Hyper Bike (D, E) was another surprise. Although it was early and had some control issues as a result, the engine seems healthy, and if Boss Studios is at the helm it will likely shape up to be a quality Motocross title. Also on display was Top Gear Rally 2 (F, G).

Fans of the original N64 offering will want to keep an eye on this one. The game promises all of the depth of the original with even better handling, and more of the great course design that made the original such a blast.



KOEI dc & n64 treats

Winback is finally shaping up (J, K)! After a much needed delay, Koei's powerful in-house team Omega Force (Destrega) have been busy tweaking away at the controls, the collisions, and cameras.

This N64 stealth-action title may finally be the game it deserves to be, and with new, more playable multiplayer modes, it's sure to be enticing. Koei was also showing Seven Mansions: Uncanny Grimace (H, I). Besides laying claim to the "Show's Weirdest Name" award, this 3D survival adventure title offers one real treat that all others in the genre have overlooked: A split screen mode. Yes, it's like Resident Evil for two players. And although the engine seems to be smooth enough, the models still need a little work.



all for one trade show? then where does it go?



KONAMI resurrection without dying



a



b



c

When Castlevania was first announced on the Dreamcast, rumor had it that the game would wisely sit on the foundation of a 2.5D presentation. But now that a playable game was finally revealed behind closed doors at the show, the true nature of this latest installment of the classic series is slowly taking shape – Castlevania Resurrection (A, B, C, D, E, F) is, like it or not, fully 3D. After guiding Sonya, the female character lifted from the Gameboy Castlevania, through five extremely early levels, we came to the conclusion that the wondrous spirit of the series may just be resurrected from its death on N64. Visually, the game is already showing imagination in the grim character designs, and the gothic artwork is beautifully realized by the texture power of the Dreamcast. With team members from Castlevania IV working on Resurrection, this ambitious and highly anticipated project seems to be in capable hands. • Konami's other big Dreamcast title was Airforce Delta

(L), a flight combat game featuring over 30 aircraft and a host of mission-based objectives. • In Metal Gear Solid VR Missions (G, H), players who can't get enough of the MGS training missions can compete in as many as 300 VR scenarios, solving puzzles and determining the killer in several murder cases. • Old news is still good news – that is, when you're talking import localizations. The exceptional Goemon (I) on N64 and mystical Soul of the Samurai (M) on PlayStation will soon be available for American consumption. Unfortunately, Vandal Hearts 2 was only on video, but what we saw looked true to the original. What excited us even more was the strong presence of Suikoden II (J, K), which looked, played and sounded as good as ever.



d



e



f



g



h



i



j



k



l



m

INSIDE E3 (7) a quick look at sega's booth skills

Sega's new digs mirrored their new dreamy attitude, and the place was a zoo from morning 'til night. The Shenmue display was a main attraction, as were the strange antics of Seaman.

Wrapped around the top of Sega's curved display, Dreamcast logos danced the light-fantastic on a cool theatre screen. It was a place of discovery, as all manner of retailers and press had at the Dreamcast for the first time.



LEGO they're not just blocks anymore



Lego has entered the world of video games with an early emphasis on racing and a unique blend of real time strategy.

While obviously aimed at a younger target demographic, Lego games like Lego toys will likely find a broader audience. Both games look and play very well considering they

are still in stages of development. If you're wondering if the cars are snapped together a la the toys, well, of course they are! It will be interesting to see how they fare with their first two offerings. As soon as we get playables in the office, we'll snap to it!

midway new Kombat: R2R

The largest collection of third-party Dreamcast titles just happened to be at the Midway booth, and every one smacked of launch stardom. And yes, even Mortal Kombat (L) looked good for what it was – Mortal Kombat.

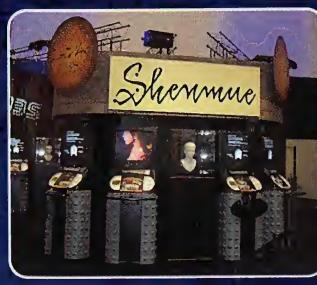
Easily Midway's strongest title and one of the surprise game of the show was Ready 2 Rumble (E, F). This arcade-style boxing game was fast and full of energy, looked great, captured a good sense of humor and played well beyond our expectations – the consummate launch title for the Dreamcast. • If you

loved Blitz on PlayStation, you'll be forced to upgrade to Dreamcast this September for the arcade-perfect version of Blitz 2000: pure multiplayer fun. • While still a bit rough around the edges, Hydro Thunder (G), the DC version of the wild arcade boat racing game, was still immensely playable.

Despite the Dreamcast domination at Midway, their other games were not to be bypassed: Gauntlet Legends (H) and Jackie Chan Stunt Master (I) are coming along nicely, and MK Special Forces (K) transports the MK universe into a third-person adventure game.



from sonic to seaman to shenmue to sega rally to sports



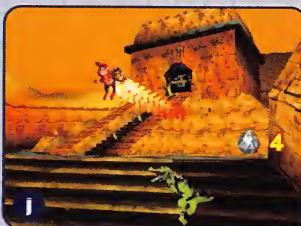
NAMCO says: dreamcast > arcade



Part of the reason the Dreamcast version of Soul Calibur (A-D) came off as such a striking achievement was that it dwarfed its arcade counterpart. More than a simple conversion, this game has been specifically designed to take advantage of the Dreamcast's strengths, and it is awash in scintillating lighting effects, beautifully choreographed, motion-captured fighters and exceptional artistic touches. And it plays like a dream. • Dragon Valor (E, F) may be Namco's first 3D action/adventure game, but if initial impressions mean anything, this game looks like it was handled with the skill of veterans. The mythical inspirations of dragons and magic is an immediately appealing part of the game, but the inventive element of multi-generational branching and rich play mechanics look to strengthen the game for the long term. • You would think that the PlayStation has reached its peak, but games like Ace Combat 3 (G, H) say otherwise: an incredible engine and multi-missions and stories highlight this final chapter in the series.

NINTENDO

The GR platform contingent always makes a beeline for Nintendo, and this year there was as a good a reason to do so as there was when Mario made his 3D debut. That, of course, was the one-two punch of Donkey Kong 64 (J-M) and Jet Force Gemini (next page, A-D). In the ape's case, it's all definitely very good, as the game is riddled with brilliant play mechanics and overflowing with personality. This could be RARE's finest hour. Not that Jet Force isn't all that it can be, it's just that to play a game like JFG at a trade show, where the game has been divided into many small parts and sprinkled over many



Part of the reason the Dreamcast version of Soul Calibur (A-D) came off as such a striking achievement was that it dwarfed its arcade counterpart. More than a simple conversion, this game has been specifically designed to take advantage of the Dreamcast's strengths, and it is awash in scintillating lighting effects, beautifully choreographed, motion-captured fighters and exceptional artistic touches. And it plays like a dream. • Dragon Valor (E, F) may be Namco's first 3D action/adventure game, but if initial impressions mean anything, this game looks like it was handled with the skill of veterans. The mythical inspirations of dragons and magic is an immediately appealing part of the game, but the inventive element of multi-generational branching and rich play mechanics look to strengthen the game for the long term. • You would think that the PlayStation has reached its peak, but games like Ace Combat 3 (G, H) say otherwise: an incredible engine and multi-missions and stories highlight this final chapter in the series.



INSIDE E3 (3) sony commands E3's center stage

Here we are at Sony city. After cruising beyond the inflatable Crash, Lara and Sweet Tooth, you can't help but notice... Monkey's everywhere! Wiesely. Sony is celebrating Ape Escape, God's gift to play mechanics. Upstairs, lucky VIP's (ahem, like us) dine on fine finger food and look down on the mass of show goers. I wonder if I can hit that guy from here?



NINTENDO apes and aliens...



screens, is next to impossible. Many of the demos started the player in an environment that, without having built up to it, he could never fully understand. But the game's anime-inspired characters coupled with the unique shooting mechanics were all one needed to draw the obvious conclusion. August can't get here soon enough. • In the FPS arena, Perfect Dark (I-L) is, hands down, a shocker. Goldeneye fans especially (and that's about most of the planet) are in for a legendary new adventure that contains some of the most inspired N64 environments we have ever seen. • On the racing front there is much to celebrate as well. Aside from the stellar Star Wars Episode One: Racer (H) which we are thoroughly addicted to, seeing Excitebike (previous page, I) in 3D gave us an extremely warm and fuzzy feeling. Somehow Left Field and Miyamoto have managed to transfer the feel of the NES classic into inspired 3D environments. The physics looked amazing too, with fully functional front and rear suspension and what appeared to be (it was running on video) a really good camera. • Rounding out the Nintendo stand—which featured enough Pokémon' to make you squint at the color yellow for the rest of your life and one happenin' Star Wars area—was a plethora of quality GBC titles, Command & Conquer (E) (I may actually play an RTS game...nah), Starcraft (F) and a great-looking RC racer called Mini Racers (G).



...but their characters are full of hot air (and lots of it!)



PSYGNOSIS

watch out, lara!



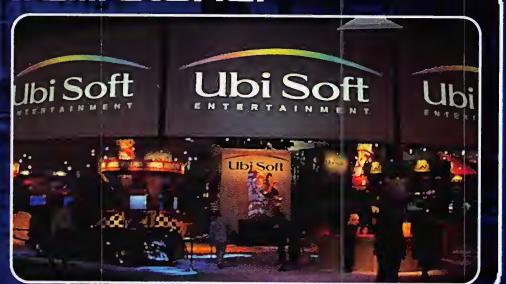
We've been seeing bits and pieces of Drakan (D, E) for months now, and seeing this enticing game at the show only deepened our desire to experience the final game; the premise of dragons, fantasy worlds and role-playing and adventure is magically appealing. • Wipeout fans can look forward to entering the blistering futuristic racing circuits once again in Wipeout 3 (C) which features new

teams, enhanced weapons, music from European DJ Sasha, and a host of other visual and gameplay refinements. • Owing a chunk of its style to Wipeout, the competent Rollcage apparently warrants an immediate sequel, and Rollcage Extreme (A, B) was already on display. The sequel assembly line is adjusted to crank out more tracks, new weapons and tournament events, and plenty of what made the first game tick – manic speed. • A company with only one sequel to show at E3 would feel a little left out, so Psygnosis made sure they were part of the crowd and introduced the self-explanatory Destruction Derby 3 (J), which features roof-top arenas and destruction; the action-infused GPolice: Weapons of Justice (F); and Colony Wars: Red Sun (I), which will utilize an ambitious soundtrack played by a professional orchestra. • For a twist on the tried and true, the multiplayer Tricks 'n' Treasures (L) infuses traditional platforming with a unique trap-setting system, and representing the twisted, Leggit (G) will employ Artificial Incompetence technology. Aimed at a younger audience, Kingsley (H) appeared to be the polar opposite to the familiar RTS of Metal Fatigue (K).



INSIDE E3 (9) i wanna live here... alone!

If you've never actually been to one of these things it's hard to describe, but to actually see the sea of butt-crack-laden Union dudes construct this massive city of complex armature and brilliant lights is a small miracle. And the second the show is over, the forklifts roll and they take it down just as quickly. But what happens to all of the dazzling displays? I'm gonna find out! I gotta have one of those big monkeys from Ape Escape!



ROCKSTAR not at all wormy...



All bets are on Grand Theft Auto 2 garnering the highest praise of the Rockstar lineup when the game, which was shown only on video, is released this October. But for gamers looking for a return to the humorous world of Earthworm Jim, his forthcoming inhabitance of the N64 might just surprise a few people – EWJ 64 (E, F) is coming along rather well. • If the

prospect of casting a lure in In-Fisherman Bass Hunter 64 doesn't sound electrifying, you're probably the gamer who is more content haphazardly racing WCW and nWo monster trucks in Monster Truck Madness 64 (G). • For heated tank combat over desert and Martian fields, Wild Metal Country (a, b) brings high-energy action to Dreamcast, and on the PC side, the WWII backdrop in Hidden & Dangerous (C, D) puts an interesting spin on action and strategy.

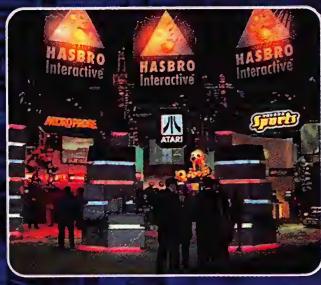
SEGA the dream lives



Walking through the Sega booth generated a palpable energy. Sure, there were a few too many racing games and far too few 3D action and adventure games, but so many quality titles came from so many different sources that no untainted video game enthusiast could possibly avoid the pervasive Sega energy. Powering that charge was the obviously spectacular Sonic Adventure (H). Unfortunately, the game had yet to receive its promised refinements, but it still remained a dominant presence. • For a little something different, the peculiar Pen Pen Tricelion is coming stateside as well as the unique fighting of Psychic Force 2012 (I) and, of course, one of the finest fighting games on any system, Virtua Fighter 3 tb (I).



looks pretty, doesn't it? too bad it's 120 frickin' degrees!



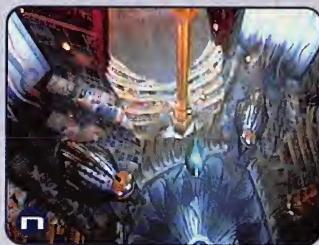
SEGA the next level has finally come



Sega's most ambitious (and costly) title to date, Yu Suzuki/AM2's *Shenmue* (D, E), was shown in a limited capacity, but whether the unorthodox approach to gameplay flies or not, the game can already be hailed as an artistic achievement. The U.S. version of *Gundam* (A, B) was in full effect with giant mech shooter action and giant environments. From's *Frame Gride* (C) was totally playable and the fully-customizable mech models looked amazing. It controlled just like an *Armored Core* game, and that's good. *Dynamite Cop* (F), sequel to *Die Hard Arcade*, the *Model 2* arcade title, was a perfect translation on DC. Just pray that it's longer than the original. Surprisingly, *House of the Dead 2* (G) was stripped of its guns and playable only with a controller. Driving games were out like locusts in the heart of summer, and every title looked solid. After scrutinizing the impressive but far-from-mind-blowing *Grand Turismo* demo on PS2, it was hard not to view *Tokyo Highway Battle*—which appeared to be almost as good looking as Sony's show weapon—with even more admiration; this game looked incredible, bolstered by extraordinary lighting effects, but control was a little too tight. *Metropolis* (J, K, L), another solid racing title from UK developer Bizarre Creations, demonstrated fantastic camera work, massive and rich environments, and cool go-anywhere gameplay. As for the other side of racing—



combat racing—Argonaut's *RedDog* (H, I) was on hand to represent with awesome futuristic 3D environments, cool stick-look firing (like *Turok*), and great frame rates. Swimming through beautiful oceans and opulent textures, *Ecco the Dolphin* (M-P), while unplayable, was encouraging. Ecco's model was incredible. Overall, Sega's first-party titles were some of the show's best.



SIERRA quiet quality titles shine

Continuing with their new tradition of providing highly intelligent and blatantly witty FPS titles, Sierra had *Opposing Force* (A) on display. *S.W.A.T. 3* was also being shown, with a new engine chock-full of refined effects such as the barrel fire burst in (B) and quality lighting. The gameplay now involves heated scenarios requiring

massive strategy. One of Sierra's major titles, *Gabriel Knight* (E), a complex and alluring thriller, continues to impress. The voice acting and direction appears to be top notch. Naturally one of the most exciting games in their lineup was the latest *Half Life* expansion pack, *Team Fortress 2*. You've never witnessed such cool "classic" soldier deployment, amazing role-playing team options, and creative and powerful use of the *Half Life* engine (the *Quake 2* engine, remixed). HL may soon be a major player in the online FPS battle.



SONY it's good to be king

The PlayStation 2 hype machine was already stuck in overdrive, Nintendo had three Rare gems and the beautiful prospect of a *Dolphin*, and all indications point to the finest launch in the history of gaming for Sega's rejuvenating Dreamcast, and yet Sony's PlayStation still managed to excite. Credit this to the strength of anticipated sequels—

Grand Turismo 2 (K) looks to add to the masterpiece of the original; *Spyro 2* (L, M) still has endearing charm; the hallucinatory *Um Jamma Lammy* (I) carries the oddly addicting tone of its *Parappa* predecessor—and the staying power of luminous characters like *Crash Bandicoot* crossing into new genres—*Crash Racing* was instant fun—as well as classic genres at their best, as with *Ape Escape* (G), potentially the next great character-driven 3D action/platformer. *Grandia* (J), originally an amazing Saturn title, is yet another ambitious PS RPG. Import buyers





SONY the one and only

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are already aware of the graphically intense Omega Boost (previous page, N, O). • One of the biggest surprises Sony had was the inventive Tomba 2 (A-D), which, like the original, centers its play mechanics around task-based scenarios. The engine is fully polygonal, but the character is contained within restrictive paths, leaving the dynamic camera to facilitate the vigorous sense of a fully 3D world. • Of course, 2D platformers are on the endangered species list, so it becomes even more of a cherish-

- able prospect when a 2.5D platformer like Tarzan (L) is bestowed upon us. • With boosted frame rate in tow, Tiny Tank's (H) solid game design and sardonic in-game monologues may now equate to a memorable experience. • Giving Crash Racing a bit of healthy competition was Speed Freaks, the cartoon racing combat game that boasted good track design and complex scenery. So the game looked pretty good, but it's hard to be impressed when you've got a playable Gran Turismo (E, F) on PlayStation 2 in the same booth.



SQUARE

- Sitting in the presence of Final Fantasy VIII (M, N, O) in a large theater with booming music is a reminder that video games are indeed an art form, capable of creating the strongest of emotions. This game takes the creation of CG to soaring new heights, and when the real-time scenes flashed across the screen, one couldn't help but wonder what talent like Square will do with PlayStation 2. No matter what your taste in design, the exquisitely beautiful Saga Frontier 2 (J, K) couldn't be ignored with its unprecedented use of hand-drawn art, delicately created to emulate water coloring. As a compelling montage of Parasite Eve 2 images leaped off the theater screen, one got the overwhelming feeling that Square will forever be known for the RPGs. Even when Square aren't playing their strong suit, they pick the RPG stable clean: Chocobos are starring in Chocobo Racing (L) and Chocobo Dungeon 2 (P).



TECMO beauty and the beats...



The one fighting game at the show capable of eclipsing the level of captivation evoked by *Soul Calibur* was the evocative *Dead or Alive 2* (B, C), its flowing grace a striking reminder that video games are set for unimaginable heights on the next generation of hardware. Because the game was only shown in demo form, we can't comment on what resides below its golden surface, but even with the obvious strain on the Dream-

cast hardware—the frame rate struggled to hold the massive levels of detail—what we saw bumped our enthusiasm for the potential of Dreamcast up yet another notch.

After rumors of a *Ninja Gaiden* proved false, the only title of significant interest left was *Monster Rancher 2* (A, D), which surpasses the original with new monsters, tournaments and improved engine.



THQ it's all good...



The label of "arcade action" may not resonate with images of originality, but who needs groundbreaking game design when you can have the delicious hack-and-slash gameplay of a game like *Knights of Carnage* (E, F)? If the thought of purging a dusky kingdom of warlocks, werewolves and gargoyles with the trusty use of magic and weaponplay fails to excite, you might be more privy to bludgeoning bikers with pool-cues and other blunt objects in *Road Rash 64* (M). • Now that the first crop of Motocross games has jumped onto next-gen systems, it is

only logical that every company adds to the selection; *Championship Motocross* (K, L) is putting the emphasis on meticulous realism to separate it from the pack. • Inspired by the comic book of the same name, *Danger Girl* (N) will take its three heavily armed female leads into the heart of six international hot spots. • Nintendo 64 owners will be getting a taste of the popular *Strike* series with the tightly-wound *Nuclear Strike* (G), and for warring in the depths of space, *Sinistar: Unleashed* (I) attempts to recapture the popularity of the old '80s action game.





TITUS makes a play... an inter-play



Aside from acquiring a hunk of one of the industry's most notable entities, Interplay, who themselves displayed some true power titles, Titus had a few surprises of their own. These shots unfortunately cannot tell the tale, but Blues Bros. 2000 (A, B) for the Nintendo 64 has a very promising 3D engine, and despite the loose control, looked extremely promising. The re-tooled Superman seemed to draw quite a crowd as well. Titus was also the show's lone home for Xena. The adventure title was nowhere in sight but the fighting game, which is in early development, was on display. Hercules (C, D) for the Nintendo 64, which features well-rounded adventure-style gameplay and some RPG elements, was a heavy hit (oh, how cliché) as well. That helicopter look familiar? Yep, it's Shiny's Stunt Copter! What started years ago as Dave Perry's answer to quick fix gaming has yet to whirl on to store shelves, but I'm tellin' ya', the physics are astonishing. Roadsters '99 (H) (check the cool Plymouth Prowler – I want one!) is coming soon.



UBISOFT



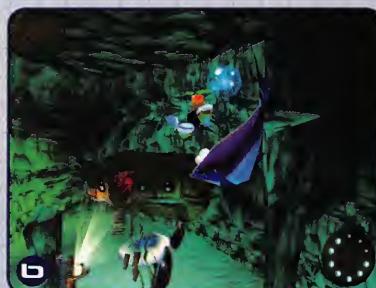
And then...I found solace. One of our last meetings at this year's show was UbiSoft, home of Ed and Ray...man. Making our way to the second floor of their titanic display, which played host to many French-speaking fellows and ladies as well as the super cool U.S. Ubi staff, we parked in a chilly little private room and had an extended visit with Tonic Trouble, which is just about done and an A title all the way, Speed Devils (N, O, P) for the Dreamcast (Speed Busters without the cops),

which has like zero clipping and is a kick to play, and, of course, Rayman 2 (next page, A-D), which is going to be an event. Ubi also gave us a crack at Wild Waters (next page, E), a very unique new racing game involving kayaks, an invitation for splendid physics. While early, this game exhibits many a unique feature. For one, it's funner'n heck to play. Skillfully using your paddles to speed up, slow down, and maneuver while barreling down nicely designed and detailed raging downhill rivers, it feels new in every way. The water effects are looking fantastic and give the player a sensation I can only compare to the cushy ride fund in Wave Race. I'm excited about Wild Waters. On the Dreamcast front UbiSoft is, of course, primed and ready for the big September launch with four titles in the works – the aforementioned Speed Devils, and Rayman 2, as well as Redline Racing, which will be markedly better than the sputtering import, and Monaco GP 2 (K), the Dreamcast's best racing simulation thus far, in my opinion. We



UBISOFT platform heaven & more!

had to descend downstairs and pour back out onto the hectic show floor to play Rayman 2 on the Dreamcast, but it was worth it. The Dreamcast does Ubi's artisans proud. I just hope it makes it out close to the other versions; otherwise I'll have caved and played it on the N64 by the time the Dreamcast game hits. Rounding out the extensive UbiSoft lineup, Hype the Time Quest (previous page, L, M) looks as great for PC as does Deep Fighter (previous page, J), their new Submarine game. If it's anywhere near as good as Sub Culture, sign me up!



WORKING DESIGNS



Victor and the crew at Working Designs climbed out of the studio (Lunar's here!) just in time to tell us all that Lunar 2 (I, J) may make it out by the end of the year! It would be very, very cool having the sequel while Silver Star Complete is still fresh! Also on display was the treasure from Treasure Silhouette Mirage (K, L), which has yet to dazzle 2D platformers here in the States. Trust me on this one folks, this game is a 2D force with some of the most epic boss encounters you will ever see. Also on hand was Detonator Gauntlet (F, G, H), their new 60 mission, 5 ending strategy/RPG. This game looks like a winner, especially if the likes of Shining Force brought a grin to your face. Now go play Lunar! It may take you 'til the end of the year to complete it!



989 STUDIOS



989 has more than quality sports games to celebrate, namely Jet Moto 3 (M, N). Is the third time the charm? Well, after playing an early version of Jet, I'd have to say it's very likely. The game has undergone more of a redesign than it did between 1 and 2 and features some truly inspired course design as well as new rides all around. The game is also much broader in scope, as the courses have really been opened up. Shortcuts and multiple paths abound. We should have an extended hands-on preview of JM 3 very soon; just wait till you see all of the sponsors. Oh my!



3DO role-playing and furious action



3DO was showing off several upcoming titles, including Army Men: Sarge's Heroes (A), the first Army Men title for the N64 which supports both the RAM Pak and Rumble Pack, and will sport multiple playable characters, 14 missions, a host of new weapons and effects, and plenty of Army Men action. • Also on tap was their newest PC wargame, Gulf War: Operation Desert Hammer (B), an arcade-style tank-based shooter that lets the player go back to the Gulf in the year 2001 and finish what we started back in the 20th century. • The latest in their series of D&D-style role players for PC is coming, Might & Magic VII (C). This one boasts better graphics, more character classes and races, and the freedom to play as good or evil and still finish the game. • Crusaders of Might & Magic (D) is slated for PlayStation, but it's not just another RPG. In fact, it's not an RPG at all, but a 3D action game with role-playing elements. We look forward to spending more time with it.



• E3 SPORTS •

ACCLAIM sports from the inside out



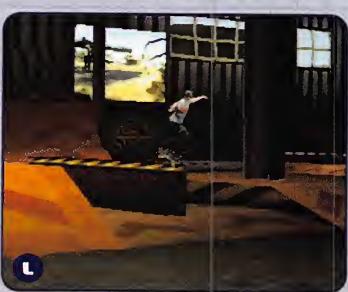
- Quarantined inside a stronghold of monitors, Acclaim displayed updates of all of their seasonal sports titles, along with a fresh entry for the Dreamcast. Titles on hand included Quarterback Club 2000 for the DC and N64 (E, F); though the DC version was a disappointment in visual flare and gameplay; the N64 game is the best version yet. With baseball fervor reborn, fans should be happy with All-Star Baseball 2000 on the N64 (G). Jeremy McGrath Supercross looks to be shaping up into another great DC title. The motorcycle models and physics provide a



nice feel to the game (H). Round off the lineup is WWF Attitude. Fine-tuning last year's wrestling game, WWF Attitude promises to give players more of the same. Still a favorite among thousands, the game now totes a Pay-Per-View mode. Crazy stuff (I, J).

ACTIVISION these boarders aren't just cool...they're ice!

- Anyone who has seen or stepped on a skateboard has heard the name Tony Hawk. His abilities on the ramp and more so in the air are spoken of as being unreal and theoretically impossible. One of the originators and truly proclaimed innovators of modern vert skateboarding has finally found yet another platform to Nosepick. The game isn't set for release until October, so I can only anticipate the possibilities set for the final product. Acquiring big-name licenses and following through with equal prestige has been a masterstroke of jerky treats with software companies. With the collaboration of all parties involved, the game should be mad skills.



ELECTRONIC ARTS the 800-lb. gorilla is set for '99



FIFA for the PC is going to knock you on your arse (A). Following the success of last year's ringleader, Knockout Kings is back for another installment on the PS and coming to the N64 (B). Crafted to give the most unique feel ever in PC basketball, NBA Live 2000 arrives (C, D). Only a few gorgeous stills are available, but SuperBike 2000 for the PC is a first for EA (E). Pit crew radio communications and team strategy bring home the Formula 1 experience (G). Much more realism has been put into the NASCAR game for PSX; look for new high-res car models and enhanced physics, for starters (F). An insane amount of track editing and hand-picked cars have been put together in Hot Wheels for the PSX and N64 (I). Much like a base runner taking third and heading for home, Triple Play 2000 has cornered the market and taken the game to all-star standings (J, K, L). Tiger is back to reshape last year's bogey into a birdie (M, N). What a great time to be part of the technologically capable hinterland clique. Now players can use the ol' buck shot to 86 timid woodland creatures in Master Big Game Hunter (O). Men wrestling in tights: these sorts of games sell by the billfold. Those of you into that sort of thing are going to do spinning lariats with the new WCW Mayhem on the way (P).



INFOGRAMES international flair



Infogrames has two stand-out sports games headed your way: LeMans 24 hours and UEFA Striker. I know, more Soccer. But there's always room for improvement and this one, for PC, looked like it was on the right track. Striker (B), has some interesting camera swings, nice depth and juiced play mechanics. Speaking of tracks, Lemans 24 hours (A) has 24 hours worth and slick car models to boot. Hey, isn't that the Michelin Tire Man? I wonder how many polygons he is? We'll have more info on these and all of Infogrames' new games in the months ahead.

KONAMI the tradition continues...



Blades of Steel is a NES classic, and Konami is trying to recapture the nostalgia with a shiny new PS and N64 version (C). Still trying to get things right on the hardwood, In the Zone (D) surfaces for 2000 on both PS and N64. Major League Soccer (E) should continue the tradition of great outdoor action. Being developed

in Japan, Konami Rally (F) is a great surprise. The game pushes some heavy speed, great track design and serious eye candy.



MICROSOFT bill & the boys take a shot at pc sports

Sticking their hands in just about any and every profit-making market possible, Microsoft is pushing full steam to make the gaming scene. NBA Inside Drive 2000 (G) has the look, but does it have the touch? Here is NFL Fever 2000 (H) going for the extra point. Lots of stats and a unique interface will appeal to simulation fans. PC sports

games emphasize realism and technical feats. Baseball 2000 (I) pushes those attributes to pennant levels. International Football 2000 (J) will have a few contenders to outscore. The graphics are not groundbreaking, but if the gameplay is there, that will be less of a concern.



NINTENDO the big 'n' serves up tasty console treats



The big 'N' have recruited some of the biggest names in the biz to sport licenses for their, well, sports games. Ken Griffey's Slugfest (K) has been toolled to a more major league feel. Underneath the dazzling visuals lies a very playable game of shag flies. The sneaker pimps of arena ball have come together to join Kobe in Kobe Bryant Basketball (L). With a predictable roster update, the game has gone through a play mechanic overhaul as well. There are still some issues found from earlier play tests, but like any game developed and produced by the all mighty 'N,' the game will find its feet. At last Mario has found another golf course through his escapades and adventures. Bringing along some friends, Mario Golf 64 (M) promises everything 8-bit swingers have been dreaming of. An easy interface will attract many gamers to this game.



SEGA it's all about sega sports, baby!

The faithful will celebrate and the disbelievers will eat their ill-spoken words. The Sega Dreamcast and, more importantly, Dreamcast software is far beyond anything available on any format. NFL 2000 (N) plays incredibly smooth and offers the deepest game experience to date. Get ready for kickoff in September. Coming at you from the same developers, NBA 2000 (O) spoons up every nuance and trick involved on and off the court. Everything in the game is animated to represent the most true-to-life basketball game created (o). Cleaned up and highly polished, Sega Rally 2 (P) will team up with the 56k modem to keep phone lines busy for months on end. Sega has made the needed tweaks for launch.



UBISOFT no rayman golf or tonic trouble tennis here

All-Star Tennis (Q) appears to be using last year's lightweight Tennis Arena engine to mold a skilled and more serious game. Formula 1 racing is just that – fast speeds, questionable frame rates (R). More Dreamcast action in the form of Monaco GP2 (S) is also coming from Ubisoft and should hit home with hard core sim. fans.



E3 HANDHELDS

Hot stuff: Surprisingly, the coolest handheld game at E3 was Activision's Tarzan (A), slated for release at the same time as the movie. The animation and control are console-perfect, and it looks to be one of the best platformers for GBC yet! Also greatly anticipated: Capcom's Resident Evil for GBC (B), just to see if they can pull it off.



Action, platformers, and other stuff: Nintendo's Conker's Pocket Tales (C) is still on track, along with Konami's Spawn (D). Earthworm Jim (E) from Crave is rough, but not due until September, and they've got Godzilla: The Series in the works as well. Vatical's upcoming lineup includes Spy vs. Spy (F), as well as Vigilante 8, Yar's Revenge, and Deer Hunter.



Adventure: New RPGs are on the way for GBC: check out Konami's Survival Kids (G) and Azure Dreams (H), and be on the lookout for Atlus' Revelations DS.



Racing Action: Konami Rally (I) is joined by a host of driving games (Midway's SF Rush, Nintendo's F-1 World Grand Prix, Titus' Roadsters '99, and Vatical's Top Gear Pocket), and they also showed the Moon-Patrol-like Motocross Madness (J) – simple but fun.

Arcade conversions: Capcom gets the prize, bringing to the GBC Street Fighter Alpha (K), 1942 (L), and Ghosts N' Goblins (M). Honorable mention: Crave's Asteroids, Midway's Paperboy and

Spy Hunter/Moon Patrol, and Namco's Pac Man & Ms. Pac Man Special Color Editions.

Sports: They're on the way big time, with Acclaim's All Star Baseball (Q) & WWF Attitude (R) and Nintendo's Ken Griffey Jr. Slugfest (S). Konami's International Track & Field (T) and Blades of Steel (U) are joined by Major League Soccer and NBA In the Zone. For more sports action, look for Infogrames' UEFA Soccer and Take 2's Alexi Lalas Soccer, and then there's THQ: FIFA 2000, Madden NFL 2000, NBA Live 2000, NHL 2000, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000, and WWF, all coming soon!

Extra! Extra! Look for future coverage on Infogrames' Mission: Impossible, Kemco's Daikatana, Nintendo's Bionic Commando, Crystalis, and Star Wars Racer, Red Storm's Rainbow Six, and Take 2's Space Station: Silicon Valley.



GRE3 EXCLUSIVE!

**SPROCKET**
in development by SUCKER PUNCH

The developers of Sprocket, Sucker Punch, have been working on this innovative 3D platformer for some time now, but it's still publisher-free and very hush-hush. After the demo presentation, hidden deep within a back room in Nintendo's E3 booth, I can totally understand why Sucker Punch aren't hitting the mainstream with Sprocket just yet: It's easily one of the most playable and innovative mascot-driven N64 platformers to date.

Sprocket is a little unicycled character with cool abilities. First and foremost is his Tractor Beam. With this beam he can pick up or attach to virtually any object in the environment. Now, it's important to mention that absolutely everything in Sprocket has physics. If you use your Tractor Beam to throw a box or crate it will realistically bounce off objects in the environment. Some plants (that act as platforms), for example, will sway to and fro as Sprocket climbs atop them. If the same plant comes into contact with a plant just beside it, that plant will also sway, but again it's never a pre-set response; it's all on the fly, and totally dynamic.

There will be so much to do in Sprocket. In a Roman-themed level, you need to get past a guard at one point to progress. Unfortunately, Sprocket isn't wearing the colors of the Imperial Guard, so he's not getting through. In this room there is a very cool puzzle: Several pools of paint are scattered about, as well as a pool that cleans off all the paint.

You need to combine the colors from each pool to paint half of Sprocket one color, and half of him another color. The trick to this involves matching and mixing colors, then returning to the cleansing pool for a dip, but you must carefully dip only half of Sprocket into the pool so that his other half retains the Imperial colors. You'll also climb aboard a weird hovercraft in this level. This vehicle is incredibly fun to steer, but it's also equipped with a paint cannon. In a wickedly creative twist, you can blast the environment, thus altering the texture colors using the paint cannon...from a first-person targeting camera no less. And get this: If you stray off course into a nearby sheep field, you can blast the poor creatures, changing the color of their wool. Paint Blast one red or yellow, and it does a happy backflip. Blast one with black paint, and it will flip over onto its back and play dead. It's too funny.

Needless to say, Sprocket was very impressive. The N64 needs deep, intelligent creativity in its 3D platformers these days, and Sprocket honestly demonstrates some of the most creative play mechanics in the genre – right up there with Mario and Banjo. It even has a great engine. We'll be keeping an eye on this intriguing little title.



In the sequence below, you can see Sprocket's main play-mechanic, the Tractor Beam, come into play. Once an object is 'grabbed' using the Beam, you may use a targeting icon to direct the path of the throw. Oft-times you'll need to plop objects into specific locations—such as sheep onto thorn walls (!).





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E3 '99 WRAPUP

gamers' republic editors' top ten e3 games

DAVE HALVERSON publisher/editor-in-chief

1. <i>DONKEY KONG 64</i>	N64	6. <i>MESSIAH</i>	PC
2. <i>SONIC ADVENTURE</i>	DC	7. <i>GIANTS</i>	PC
3. <i>TOMBA 2</i>	PS	8. <i>CRASH RACING</i>	PS
4. <i>TARZAN</i>	PS	9. <i>JET FORCE GEMINI</i>	N64
5. <i>RAYMAN 2</i>	DC	10. <i>EXCITEBIKE 64</i>	N64



This was a great show. Not because of any one game, but because of a collective array of available software across every genre and the presence of three major hardware manufacturers.

Besides there being new Dreamcast games (like *Castlevania Resurrection*, *Toy Commander*, and *Red Dog*) around every corner, Sony brought an ear-to-ear grin to my face with *Ape Escape*, *Tomb 2* and *Crash Racing*, and Nintendo delivered three playable RARE games under one roof and a new *Excite-bike* (by *Left Field* with a little Miyamoto magic) to boot! Of course, the show had its share of letdowns as well. *Climax Landers* and *Elemental Gimmick Gear* were both no-shows, and the American-developed *Castlevania Resurrection* for Dreamcast looked gorgeous but was super early, looking more like a mid-2000 release than a launch title. I'd also hoped to catch a glimpse of *Dragon Quest VII* for the PS, thinking Sony would have signed up for the localization effort, but the game remains a Japan-only title for the time being. Overall, though, I'm excited about the future and quite content that a strong three-console market can and will make gaming in the next century a veritable user's paradise.



BRADY FIECHTER executive editor

1. <i>RE CODE: VERONICA</i>	DC	6. <i>RESIDENT EVIL 3</i>	PS
2. <i>SHENMUE</i>	DC	7. <i>FEAR FACTOR</i>	PS
3. <i>DONKEY KONG 64</i>	N64	8. <i>CRASH RACING</i>	PS
4. <i>RAYMAN 2</i>	DC	9. <i>TOMBA 2</i>	PS
5. <i>SOUL CALIBUR</i>	DC	10. <i>CASTLEVANIA</i>	DC



News flash: Sega of America is back. Nearly every game at the show was good, and more than half were exceptional. To walk through the Sega booth without experiencing some sort of enthusiasm was indication of the hopelessly jaded critic. How thrilling it is to be a gamer in a time when technology is starting to shake the chains that bind developer's imaginations, freeing 3D game design to capture ideas in their entirety—not in tattered chunks pieced together from the scraps.

In some ways I found the ideas fostered at the show as evocative as the games themselves; the mere pondering of these revolutionary new systems breeds excitement. But until 2000 rolls around, I'm more than willing to continue with games like *Donkey Kong 64*, *Resident Evil 3* and *Crash Racing*, among others. And for all the great games like these continuing through the year, it is important not to forget that a playable *Soul Calibur* and *Shenmue*—groundbreaking works well beyond what we've so readily become accustomed to—are on a system that has already shown that it's the real deal in next-generation hardware. The next vital step in the evolution of video games has begun.



MIKE GRIFFIN online editor

1. <i>SOUL CALIBUR</i>	DC	6. <i>EVERQUEST EXP.</i>	PC
2. <i>POWER STONE</i>	DC	7. <i>GUN BEAT</i>	DC
3. <i>GRAN TURISMO 2</i>	PS	8. <i>SPROCKET</i>	N64
4. <i>SHENMUE</i>	DC	9. <i>DRIVER</i>	PC
5. <i>SONIC ADVENTURE</i>	DC	10. <i>METAL SLUG</i>	NGPC



Sega mastered the show. The DC hype was severe but Sega answered with an amazing booth packed with so much playable software. As a long-time Sega fan (thinking of SOA's painful blunders of the past), I can't believe they pulled it off. Dreamcast was everywhere, on everybody's lips and in everyone's minds. It seems as though over half of the development community is working on a DC project. And now they have the window (mid-late 2000 for PS2) that they need ed. Looking good!

I played a bunch of games all over the show. *Soul Calibur* was killer in every way. I'm buying it ASAP. *Power Stone* is brilliant and I was happy to know that so many U.S. gamers would finally be exposed to it. *GT2* will be great. It looks good again, and the physics and control are too tight to believe. *Shenmue*, on the other hand, is still a gorgeous enigma. I think I'll like the gameplay, but I'm not sure! Surprise games like *Sprocket* made my E3 better, I was amazed to find *Gun Beat*, *Metal Slug* is too cool on NGPC, and word finally leaked regarding the EQ expansion pack! A cool transitional show!



ERIC PRATTE pc editor

1. SOUL CALIBUR	DC	6. ANACHRONOX	PC
2. QUAKE 3 ARENA	PC	7. STAR WARS RACER	N64
3. UNREAL TOURNAMENT	PC	8. ACE SAGA	PC
4. DUNGEON KEEPER 2	PC	9. PEACEMAKER	PC
5. TRIBES 2	PC	10. IMPACT OF POWER	PC



I came to E3 to play Soul Calibur for DC for the first time. Everything else was secondary. Soul Consumer, er Calibur, held the E3 denizens enraptured in glee for all of E3's three wonderful days. Next I could be found gawking like a redneck in headlights at the new level of Quake 3 Arena, then I was getting neck-cramps while fixated on Unreal Tournament. The true showstoppers were the conversations I had with John Romero and Scott

Youngblood about Daikatana and Tribes 2, respectively. Both men were forthcoming and their games look awesome.

TOM STRATTON sports editor

1. READY TO RUMBLE	DC	6. NBA 2000	DC
2. NFL 2000	DC	7. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER PS	PS
3. GRAN TURISMO 2	PS	8. TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE DC	DC
4. NHL 2000	PC	9. NBA LIVE 2000	PC
5. MARIO GOLF	N64	10. CRASH RACING	PS



The show had to be one of the most diverse in years. It was tough walking away from Sega's booth to look at games on other platforms. The visual virtue of the Dreamcast is backed by very obviously strong software support. Sony constructed a booth that was about the size of a small midwestern town. Nintendo showcased a 1:1 scale model of a pod racer from Episode 1; even more impressive were the stunning surplus of

games. EA had a great booth and comfortable sports bar. At the end of each day, I could not wait until the next morning.

ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO ELECTRONIC

In 1913 the ship Orpheus mysteriously disappeared at sea, 45 souls were lost, or were they?

Echo Night takes you on an exciting supernatural adventure to past times and distant places. Along the way you will encounter unusual characters, visit past eras, and talk with the dead. Be warned, this adventure is not without peril, there are devious mini-games and puzzles you must survive before you can learn the secrets of the dead and the ancient talisman stones.

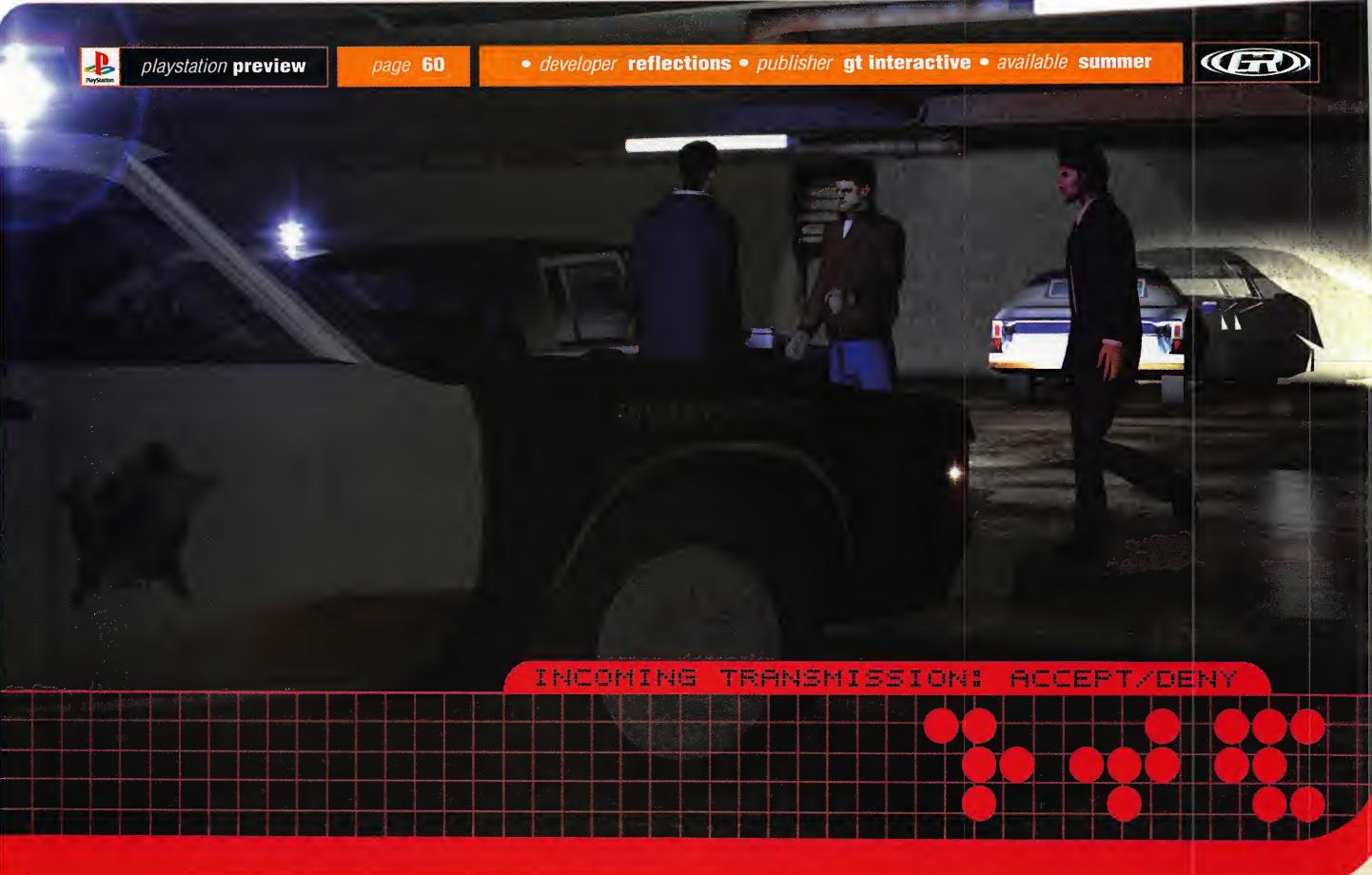
Echo Night Coming in July



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ASCI GAME ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY



DRIVER

 BY MIKE GRIFFIN

*Insane car physics and massive streaming city environments...
Run from cops committing vehicular mayhem on painfully realistic streets!*



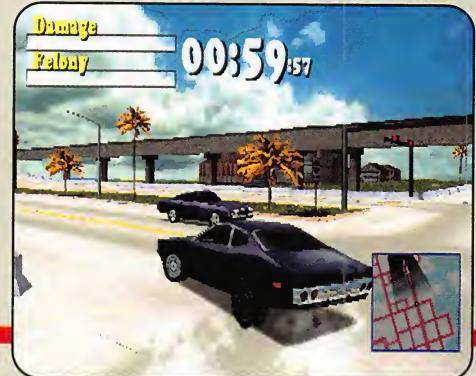
One of the most exhilarating challenges in Driver is the the night missions. With the decreased visibility and increased risk, the adrenaline flows non-stop! Check out the cool nighttime lighting effects!



Good driving games come in many forms, under many guises, showing off all sorts of unique bells and whistles. Sometimes it's great A.I. It's always thrilling when vicious CPU cars outmaneuver you, smash into you at precisely the right moment, or falter realistically during a critical situation. Oft-times it's the shape and design of the roadway and its surroundings that does the trick, dwarfing you within its precise, interesting confines. Your vehicle against all of theirs, your wheeled menace against the environment and all of its many challenges. GT Interactive's Driver is loaded with these

belts and whistles and many more, complimented by fantastic controls and a great physics model. The A.I. is tweaked just right so far, and the design of the missions and accompanying levels is rock-solid and totally satisfying. I love vehicular combat games (I've played V8 and Carmageddon 2 more than Ridge Racer 4), and I love alternative-driving games like Crazy Taxi. Now I'm starting to seriously enjoy Driver. It's sort of Grand Theft Auto in 3D, but infinitely cooler to control.

Driver is being developed by Reflections, well known for their alternative-driving prowess. The theme of the game is all late '70s/early '80s. The hefty rides you'll be driving resemble old Monte





Here's a smattering of Driver's mad driving demands. (Top left) This is the coolest mission I've played so far: A mob gopher decides to take his sweet time paying back a little debt. Now you pick him up in a taxi and scare the #@*& out of him...and you get paid for it!

Carlo-types, Grand Marquis-like boats, souped-up Chargers, and so on. These are classic war machines rumbling with the power of massive V8s and 405 powerhouses. You are the hired driver. From your shady apartment/motel base of operations you'll receive messages on your answering machine from various criminal factions within the city. This city could be San Francisco, Miami, or even New York, and each is modeled in an amazingly large scale, almost precisely like the real-life counterpart. So huge, in fact, are these amazing maps, that the game must load huge chunks at once seamlessly and on-the-fly in order to approximate the actual breadth of the real-world environment. The smooth talking '70s-style bad guys have big plans for you in these seething metropolitan masses.

This game has so much going for it. Sometimes I think I'm enjoying the missions more than anything else, though. It's so movie-like and surreal: I'm being told to transport a trunk full of shotguns across town by some shady mob guy. Or maybe I'm offered big bucks for driving the crooks away from a bank heist. Sometimes I need to taxi wanted criminals to their safehouses on the outskirts of town. Speaking of which, one of my favorite missions has you picking up a lackey (owes the mob too much cash) in a stolen Taxicab to drive some fear into him. During this mission there's a "Freak" meter in the top right corner of the screen which monitors how well you're scaring the poor bastard. In other missions you'll have to chase monorails, trash cars, or drive expensive stolen cars from one end of town to the other without a scratch.

All the while, cops are out in full force around every corner. You have a "Felony" meter that reflects how many laws you've broken while driving, and if it's too high the flatfoots are more likely to wail the sirens and glue to your ass. If you're driving well and you spot a cop on the map you can even slow down, wait for green lights, or stop at cross streets, and they won't bother you. Yes...but it's the chase that sets this game apart from all others in the category. Once you have a couple of cruisers stuck to you like pigs on a spit, it's the most thrilling, high speed, and undeniably movie-like chase experience I've had the pleasure to play in sometime. It's nothing



at all like Need for Speed's Hot Pursuit mode or Test Drive's cop chase...this feels like the real deal. Screaming around wild corners, through realistic late-day traffic, down cluttered alleyways, through multi-level parking structures, crashing bodywork as you fly over cross-traffic on San Fran's classic hilly streets. And there's always another way to go, like a real city, to reach your goal and ditch the cops. And thanks to spot-on controls and the awesome physics, they've wholesomely captured the essence of the car chase.

Driver is coming along very nicely. Ultimately, the game deserves better hardware (an accelerated PC version is on the way—yes!), but it manages to coax the PS into providing rigorous streaming, 30 fps rendering of large environments, great sound, and excellent subtle details (like trailing light effects at night). Most important, though, is the rock-solid gameplay and wickedly fun mission and level design. I can't wait to play the final. 



EXPENDABLE

BY DAVE HALVERSON

*Hard-core action shooter fans have reason to celebrate...
These soldiers are armed and dangerous and headed to the DC!*

How long has it been since you embraced a purebred action shooter? Was it the crazed antics of Loaded (oh Momma!), the explosive Mercs, or maybe as far back as Ikari Warriors or Commando on the NES? Every great console needs one, and the Dreamcast is getting its first sooner rather than later. Rage's second DC offering after Incoming, Expendable takes the tried-and-true action-shooter formula and turns the action and interaction levels up beyond frantic. Not only is this game drop-dead gorgeous, but it plays extremely well, with its unique blend of dodging, strafing, sniping and attacking. Expendables are pure killing machines, and you get to control a whole squad of 'em! Dropped into infested zones from the mothership, these space marines are bent on one thing

only: mass destruction. If it moves, they'll kill it. Hell, even if it doesn't they'll blow it up anyway, just to watch the fireworks.

During the game all manner of hell breaks loose. In the first level, a massive vehicle flips out of control, stopping just at your feet, taking with it a huge powerline that ultimately topples and blows the entire mess to smithereens. There are places to hide, objects to explode revealing assorted items, and the military/techno music throbs away for maximum immersion; this game is a serious kick in the pants. The 3D-spatialised sound really hits home and the explosions have to be seen to be believed. These shots were extracted from our PC demo, so expect the Dreamcast version, with its superior texture capabilities, to look even better. We'll have more on Rage's Expendable as Dreamcast info begins to emerge. It played great at E3! ⚡





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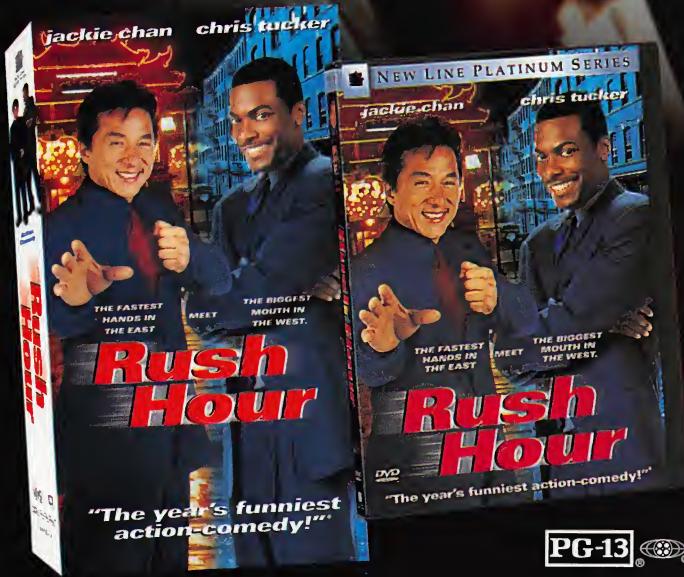
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DVD
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GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEWS

This is the last month I'll have to write in this silly little box. I can't for the life of me even understand why we felt the need to say anything here besides "here's this month's scores!" in the first place. Oh well, like I said, this is the last time. Bye.

GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

DOMESTIC REVIEWS

HYBRID HEAVEN	C	C	C+
LUNAR: SSS	A-	B+	B
QUAKE 2	B	B-	B
R-TYPE DELTA	A-	A-	A-
STAR OCEAN	C+		
STAR SHOT	B/C+	C	C
STAR WARS	B+		
WORLD DRIVER CHAMPIONSHIP	B-	B	B+

IMPORT REVIEWS

BUST A MOVE	B+
COTTON	D
CYBER ORG	D+
OMEGA BOOST	B
RASETU NO KEN	C
REDLINE RACING	C

1. Games marked in **GREEN** are highly recommended for your gaming collection.

2. Games marked in **RED** should be avoided completely.

[Subject to the reviewer's personal preferences, it can be generally accepted that any game scoring a B or higher is a great way to spend your day. Games scoring a low D or F should be microwaved for three seconds and returned.]

GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEW SYSTEM



[A+ to A] Games in this bracket are the best of the best. They feature the highest quality visual presentation, and are excellent in both initial and long term playability. The very best video game of its type, worthy of every gamer's undivided attention. *Example: Silent Hill*

[A- to B] Excellent, solid, and highly playable pieces of software, although they lack minor polish to become truly outstanding. Slight frame rate problems, a marginally disappointing ending or any number of small quirks may take an otherwise exalted release down a notch. *Example: R-Type Delta*

[B- to C] Games in this bracket are generally very good, but may have one or more flaws. A game receiving a B- may be a great game that's just too short or has irritating music, while a C may have these same problems plus a couple more. Very good to average entertainment. *Example: Hybrid Heaven*

[C- to D] Games in this bracket require serious help in two or more areas. Perhaps the control responds horribly and the characters animate poorly. Although a game of this caliber may have had a great initial concept, it was never fully realized in the final stages of design. *Example: Cotton*

[D- to F] Very rarely will you come across a game of this lack of quality. A complete dearth of vision, a determination to remove any semblance of gameplay or fun, and particular attention made to use none of the most rudimentary of the system's proprietary tools. *Example: Turok 2 GBC*

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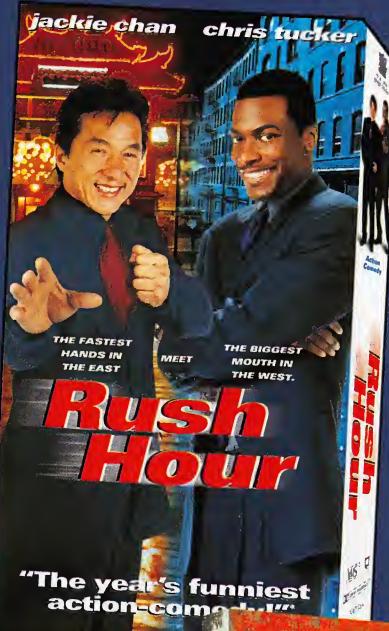
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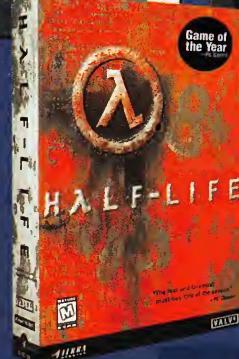
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HYBRID HEAVEN

BY TOM STRATTON

I decided not to write this review until after completely going through the game. I stuck to that intention, though there were many times when I would wonder to myself, Why? The premise is interesting, and only because I wanted to see the story develop did I continue through to the distressing end. Segments of the game are interrupted by some stylish cinematic cut sequences, which move the story at a pace that helps you feel you are making progress. Without these, I was not sure if I was heading in the right direction.

The main character, though a bit stiff, controls well and responds on cue. Unfortunately, the camera logic causes the player to take breaks during the flow of action, forcing quick adjustments to see the surrounding area. The environments are refined and vast, but they are also very simple in terms of architecture. Many of the rooms are nothing more than cleverly mapped shoe boxes, although there is seldom a feeling of "Have I been here?" as the textures constantly evolve. Story-driven characters each have a recognizable look, while frequently engaged enemies lack any personality.

The AI for these enemies is just as unpolished, with predictable patterns and vulnerabilities that are easy to identify and do not ever change even late into the game.



As for the fight engine, it has a turn-based influence. An attack meter raises while moving into or away from the enemy's position. Different sets of commands are available, depending on whether you're initiating or averting an attack. At the start there is a core set of attacks available. New moves are not achieved through leveling up, but by being thrashed by an enemy using the new attack. As well, each and every attack available has its own attack power; the more an attack is used, the more damage it will inflict.

This is where the fights quickly become monotonous and uninspiring. Instead of stringing together elaborate combos and experimenting with newly obtained attacks, it is much more efficient to power up a collection of four to six moves. This simple strategy is effective on every battle situation, taking away any sort of depth during a fight, from the first encounter to the final boss. These fights are equal to about 70 percent of the game play. The other 30 percent lies in collecting a museum of rarely used (or needed) items and locating terminals that update a key card used to unlock continuing paths.

Include with these shortcomings over-the-counter sound effects and a suitable but not memorable soundtrack – possibly a more ambient approach would have fared better. There is a 2-player mode as well, but the crawling pace of turn-based battle becomes fatiguing when the premise has you pounding the daylights out of the other person. With about six more months allotted for development, this title could have broken out of the normality it is plagued with. The game truly benches on the line of middle of the road. Not worthy of a purchase, Hybrid Heaven will probably find itself as a houseguest through a rental.



■ VERY EASY TO PICK UP AND UNDERSTAND

■ FIGHT SEQUENCES ARE REPETITIOUS AND PROSAIC

■ ELEMENTARY PUZZLE SOLVING

■ UNIMAGINATIVE CHARACTER DESIGN

REPUBLIC SAYS...

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LUNAR: SILVER STAR STORY

BY DAVE HAL VERSON



The evolution of the RPG has been littered with twists and turns, as designers throughout the years have attempted with each new project to improve or re-invent any number of proven elements. Outer territory maps, fighting engines, village and town architecture, commerce systems, leveling up, and all walks of intermissions have been worked and re-worked. Graphically, companies have wrestled with sprites and polygons, CG, and FMV in an effort to engulf the end user in new and better ways. Surprisingly, among the hordes of traditional RPGs (excluding strategy and action-based RPGs) that have been created, only a few stand out as truly memorable experiences – a testament to the dedication it takes to tug on the heart strings while pleasing the gamer in all of us.

Few have done it better than the original Sega CD version of *Lunar: the Silver Star*. Five key elements came together perfectly over a development period that seemed to last forever: detailed hand-drawn graphics, a brilliant original fighting engine, anime-styled cinemas, an epic story, and music that literally took you away. Now,



Above, Alex's party finds a drunken Kyle locked up for safe-keeping in the Nanza jail. You can see Alex's reflection in the snot bubble! *Lunar* is jammed with classic anime scenarios.

JUST



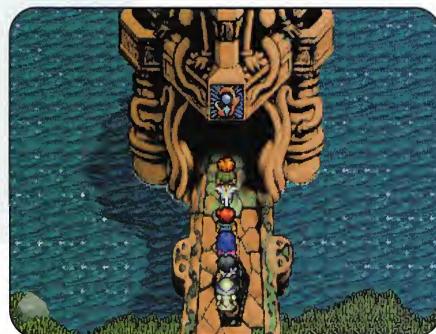
American RPG fans are in for an epic adventure... Working Designs spared no expense

years later, during the first stages of polygonal dominance, the game is returning, fully realized. Gamearts have taken the time to expand on every aspect of their original vision, and Working Designs have added even more to the U.S. version, by far their most exhaustive localization yet. *Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete* has been reinvented to such an extent that those with faded memories of the Sega CD game will barely recognize it and first-time *Lunar* players will revel in its deep plot and insane amount of thought-provoking gameplay. If you've grown accustomed to the recent RPG formula in which, by leveling up high enough and stowing enough healing herbs and MP, you can cruise through and watch the story unfold, well, forget it. As it was, and should always be, no matter what your level in *Lunar: SSSC*, a lot of thought must go into each and every scenario in the game. At no time will the enemies, or especially the bosses, let you easily pass. You are almost always in danger of either dying or running out of supplies; the balance in the game is uncanny. The amount of supplies Nall (Alex' pet, a floating cat-like creature who's the brunt of many a joke) can carry is limited and each party member is restricted to a very small number of herbs or replenishing objects. During battle, Nall's rather expansive inventory cannot be accessed, so you need to be outfitted correctly at all times. *Lunar*'s stubborn bosses are another story. The higher your level, the higher their resistance, so forget about leveling up and cutting right through them; AI won't save you either. Strategic inventory management, healing, spell casting, and technique are all required each and every time you encounter one of these behemoths.

Not since *FF III* have I been so challenged in the boss fighting arena.

Battles aside, *Lunar* is to hand-drawn RPGs what *Castlevania SOTN* was to hand-drawn 2D. The reworked visuals are exceptional, with animated backgrounds and detailed architecture in and around every city and town, not to mention the hours of gorgeous cinemas. In one pivotal scene aboard a massive sea-going vessel, Luna serenades the stars in a stunning visual array incorporating rendered and hand-drawn elements. It's the sort of moment RPG players live for.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 111



■ BEAUTIFUL HAND-DRAWN VISUALS AND ANIME CINEMAS
■ OLD SCHOOL RPG GAMEPLAY, NOT A WALK-THROUGH

■ DEEP, IMMERSIVE STORY, TONS OF CHARACTERS
■ I LIKE THE ORIGINAL'S MUSIC BETTER

REPUBLIC SAYS...

WORKING DESIGNS HAVE ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET FOR GAMEARTS' FULLY REALIZED VERSION OF *LUNAR* WITH STUNNING RESULTS. A MUST-OWN RPG.



The PC multiplayer phenom undergoes a redesign for the console market... And the result lives up to the Quake standard of excellence



QUAKE II

BY BRADY FIECHTER

Quake II on Nintendo 64 is, of course, the console version of the PC first-person-shooter classic that has become a hopeless addiction for countless gamers. But where Quake II on the PC will forever be remembered for its indomitable multiplayer aspect, this formidable Nintendo 64 conversion plays its strong suit as a single-player experience.

One does not play Quake 2 N64 hoping for a new perspective on the durable FPS formula. This game works because it takes a ingeniously basic, well-established idea and uses it to great effect. The newly designed levels offer mission-based objectives, such as destroying reactors, disengaging gravity mechanisms and activating transports, but the thrust of the gameplay ultimately comes down to navigating a maze of rooms and corridors in search of an exit – the epitome of kinetic find-the-key-and-open-the-door gameplay.

Of course, like in the original Quake,





Doom and the slew of other FPS titles of the same lineage, before an exit can be located, every monster that stands in the way must be gruesomely dismembered – in this case with a double-barreled shot gun, rocket launcher, or other vintage Quake weapon. The enemies, while in need of a boost of animations and polygons, crumple to their deaths satisfactorily, and their aggressive nature (the last-ditch weapon discharge as an enemy collapses is a nice touch) always keeps the game's energy level cranked up.

Running into a room and unloading an entire supply of ammunition is not an uncommon tactic in Quake II – manic action is all part of the ride – but careful and deliberate use of splash damage, hiding behind obstructions and carefully launching a grenade, can be a precision affair. Be prepared to take this precision to the next level as you initially struggle with the analog aiming system, which requires a surgeon's touch for accuracy.

Quake II N64 has distilled the essence of PC Quake surprisingly well, and its appealing visual sense remains a key element, adding an ominous texture that enriches the experience. Id have always shared their penchant for the macabre in their games, and while religious imagery is absent in Quake II, restraint has certainly not been abandoned: soldiers cry out in agony as they knock their heads against walls; bodies fall through chutes into the teeth of giant grinders, their remains piped into a nearby pit. It's what you come to expect in a devilishly entertaining game of Quake. ☀



Death matches are obviously a huge part of the Quake appeal. You won't want to pursue Quake II for its multiplayer aspects alone, but the inclusion of cool new arenas where you can team up, capture the flag, or just compete in an all-out frag fest is definitely a check in the plus column. But brace yourself for a destructively low frame rate in four-player competition.

■ EXCELLENT LIGHTING AND SOUND CREATE AMBIENCE
■ N64 DOES ALL IT CAN TO REPLICATE PARTICLE EFFECTS

■ GOOD DEATH-PLAYER MATCHES
■ SHORT LEVELS: DIFFICULT AIMING: FRAME RATE DROPS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

THIS RESPECTABLE CONVERSION OF THE PC STALWART IS VISUALLY IMPRESSIVE, PLAYS WELL, FOSTERS A SUPREME SENSE OF DOOM, AND PULLS OFF GOOD DEATHMATCH PLAY.

B



Irem take R-Type into the polygonal world with stunning results The PlayStation gets its best side-scrolling shooter yet

You're looking at what I'm going to call the best side-scrolling shooter yet made for Sony's PlayStation. Irem's R-Type Delta shows no signs of teething pains as the series boldly enters the polygonal world with stunning results. The game's powerful combination of accomplished imagery and supremely enjoyable gameplay make for the best shooter experience I've had since Treasure's brilliant, over-head Radiant Silvergun. And while Delta doesn't quite reach the stratospheric heights of that particular game, it easily trounces G-Darius and even Square's great Einhänder in the world of 2.5D side-scrolling shooters.

Part of the game's brilliance is that even with all the modern trimmings, it still feels like R-Type. There's the same rock-hard difficulty and highly pattern-oriented shooting action that has always been the series' calling card. It's not so much a fast bullet dodger, but rather a methodical and

deliberate style of game that rewards on many different levels.

The initial reward is the most obvious and apparent: the highly developed visuals. As the first R-Type to be constructed entirely of polygons, it's a wonder how Irem have been able to extract such a high level of graphics from the PlayStation. The frame rate often reaches 60 and everything in the game is very well constructed, from the models of your ship and enemies to the detailed and imaginative backdrops. There's a bit of a low-res look to some of the background textures, but it's all very solid and smooth, leaving a glowing overall impression. Befitting its heritage, the game has a great, chunky look to it, while still retaining a refined appearance.

This appealing chunkiness carries over to the feel of the game as well. The control is meaty and there is ample "explosion satisfaction." By that, I mean that the simple feeling of destroying ene-

R-TYPE DELTA

BY MIKE HOBBS

TYPE: R9 DELTA

FIG. 1



FIG. 2

FIG. 3

The graphical flourish of R-Type Delta is not to be scoffed at. In the lower right shot, we see a familiar face from the original R-Type rendered in 3D.



This is the classic R-Type ship, and fans will recognize all the weapons here. Making a return is the reflective laser, the rings of death, and the wall crawling blasts. The pod works as before, firing multiple shots when off of your ship and hangs in space parallel to you. The easiest ship to use with the most powerful weapons.

RX



The RX's pod, when jettisoned, will float around, handily targeting nearby enemies. When the pod is attached to your ship, you can manipulate the beams of whatever weapon you're using by moving forward or back. For instance, the yellow power up gives you two lethal whips that flail around your ship, and the red power up gives you a beam that can be highly concentrated or spread into a wide band as you move backward and forward.



My personal favorite. The R13's pod is attached to your ship by a lethal tether, taking out enemies as you manipulate the string. Also, the pod will lock onto enemies, making it the most effective boss killer around. Just fling the pod into a boss' weak spot and it does huge damage.

R13



Even with all the modern trimmings, it still feels like an R-Type... Delta easily trounces G-Darius and even Einhänder

mies is very satisfying. This has to do with the speed of the explosion animation and the sound effects, and any good shooter needs to get this highly subjective, base quality right to be halfway successful. This one does.

But above and beyond the graphics and feel, the real treat here is the gameplay. As in previous R-Types, your task centers on the manipulation of a weapon pod that can be moved to the front or rear of your ship or be fired off away from you, free floating and wreaking havoc. What's new here is the inclusion of three unique craft to choose from, each with a different mechanic as to how the pod can

be manipulated and how weapon power-ups affect them. (I describe these different abilities in detail in the ship profiles above.) Whatever their differences, they all contribute hugely to the way you play the game and the strategies you employ, and this is definitely a shooter built around strategy. You can't just blow through the game riding on the back of a bunch of continues. Each level has sets of restart points, and when you die (which you will, often) you must try each section again. The way the levels and enemy patterns are designed requires you to work out the most effective weapon, pod position, ship speed, and ship location. This is where the massive challenge of this game lies.

I can't recommend R-Type Delta more highly to shooter players. It looks fantastic and plays even better. In short, the best R-Type ever. >*

TYPE: RX DELTA



- CLASSIC DIFFICULTY AND GAMEPLAY
- INCREDIBLE 2.5D GRAPHICS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

- CLEVER AND CHALLENGING LEVEL DESIGN
- DARK AND MOODY MUSIC A PERFECT FIT

ITEM COME THROUGH WITH THE MOST ENJOYABLE AND BEST LOOKING R-TYPE YET. THANK AGETEC FOR BRINGING THIS ONE STATESIDE, AS IT'S A MUST-PURCHASE FOR SHOOTER FANS.

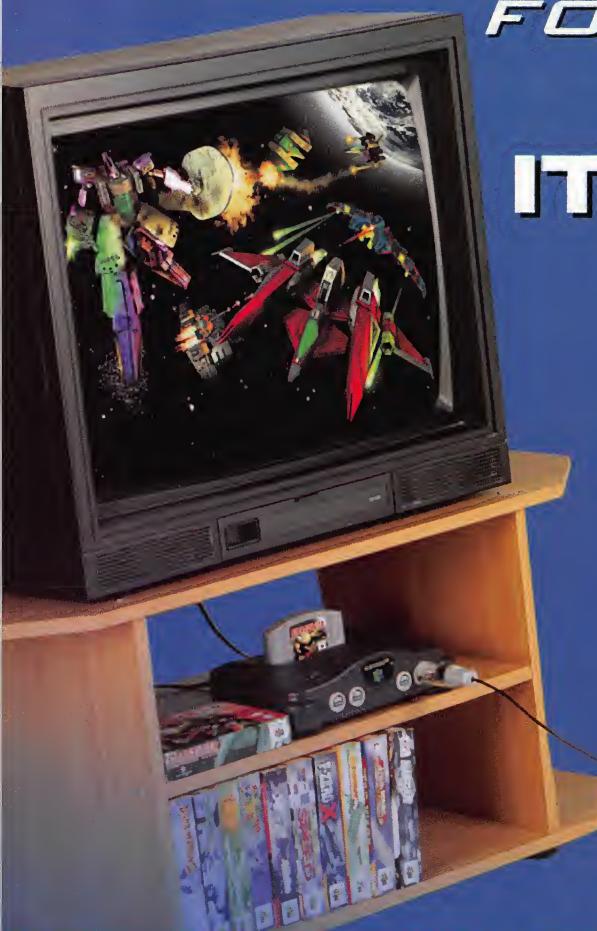


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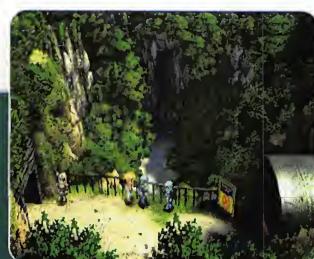


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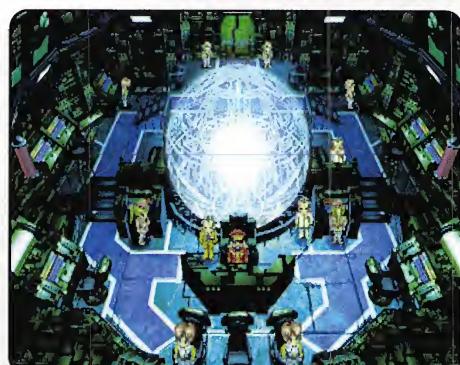
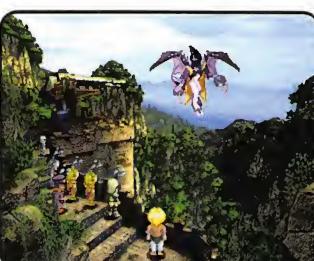
As the wildly anticipated Dragon Quest VIII remains in the distant future, this latest Enix RPG does nothing to ease the wait

STAR OCEAN

BY BRADY FIECHTER

Star Ocean is a game about characters of stunted emotions who meander through a barren wasteland of tired formulas and contrivances. Playing this extensive RPG left me with the overwhelming feeling that a more forgiving, patient audience would be drawn in to the game's intricacies and ignore the banalities of the coming-of-age story of the two selectable teenage protagonists who discover (yawn) love, revelation, maturity and self-understanding while serving as world savior. It all might marginally work if molded with a polished level of creativity, and there are occasional bursts of energy and interesting twists, but inane circumstances and insipid outcomes are continually casting looming shadows over the game's primary tasks and many fatiguing side ventures.

The story may barely registers a pulse, but there is certainly a beating heart in the innovative and spirited battles, which involve four sprite-based party members in a real-time, free-roaming skirmish of magic and weaponplay. Seasoned players will be immediately tuned into the use of spells, arcane items and typical combat strategies, but the battles take on a fresh complexion through the ability to take complete control of your allies and freely move them into any position on the battle field. Enemies can be flanked, lured away, ganged up on - team work is a must - and directly attacked by special "killer moves" unique to each character,





The high-energy battles bring the game to life. Here Claude employs one of his many devastating "killer moves."



While the idea behind Star Ocean's combat is better than its execution, the manic skirmishes carry the game a long way



and the level of effectiveness of assault is always changing as various attacks and defenses are honed and boosted from the RPG experience-system template. While the idea behind Star Ocean's combat is better than its execution, the manic skirmishes do carry the game a long way, and it is only in the somewhat perfunctory nature of the strategy and the inept computer-controlled comrades that the entertainment value takes a dive.

A trend that seems to be surfacing in today's RPGs is the abrasive use of battle cries. Star Ocean makes a costly error of surrounding the action with a bounty of annoying screams and battle chatter; the whiny, pubescent voices crying inanities like "I hate you" and "Mommy" had me looking on with incredulity.

It's enough to make you root for an embargo on

future American voices in RPG battles (and any game, for that matter). But do not forgo Star Ocean if you want to experience a world of exceptional sights: this game deftly supersedes the Final Fantasy VII paradigm of detailed prerendered backdrops, and at times the scenery is extraordinary.

While the game cannot be accused of lacking moments of visual flair, the dull characters and enemies, with simple animations and uninspired and inept sprite design, drag the game back into ho-hum territory. By the game's end I had seen some nice artwork and enjoyed tinkering with the innovative Skill System – a resource system where an exhaustive list of attributes are developed for item creation, special talent growth and combat enhancement – but the dead weight of the story sank this leaky RPG ship. *



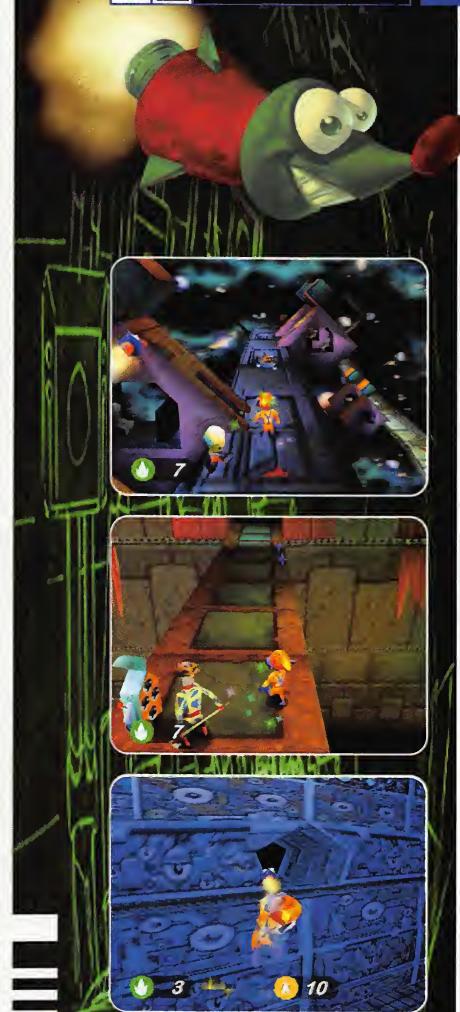
■ FANTASTIC PRERENDERED BACKGROUNDS
■ NOT A SINGLE CHARACTER WORTH REMEMBERING

■ THE BATTLE CRIES ARE UNCOMPROVINGLY GRATING
■ STORY SPRAWNS DORING, LABORIOUS QUESTS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

GAMERS WHO PLACE LITTLE EMPHASIS ON STORY WILL FIND MORE TO LIKE IN STAR OCEAN.
THE INNOVATIVE BATTLES, GOOD MUSIC AND DEEP SKILL SYSTEM ARE A LIFELINE.

C+



Having thankfully taken their time about it, Infogrames are set to deliver, as promised, Starshot (formerly known as Space Circus), a memorable action platform game for the PC and Nintendo 64 that is perhaps worthy of your attention. The peculiar lead of the same name, Starshot, is a juggler in the Space Circus, circa the 32nd century. The Space Circus was formerly the biggest show in the galaxy (up until game time, I suppose), but as the game begins Wolfgang Von Ravel's Virtua Circus has begun to take over (hey, it's virtual). The Space Circus is accumulating huge debts due to the ensuing lack of business and so it's up to our pint-sized hero and his wacky band of side bots to thwart the efforts of the Virtual Circus.

The designers at Infogrames have put quite a bit of thought in to exactly how these events will transpire, and have filled the game with all manner of unique situations. In order to fulfill each mission, rather than providing a straight shot to each destination littered with token enemies and predictable obstacles, the creators handle each arena as a mini-quest. Employing a mélange of engaging play mechanics, each planet takes on a life of its own. Starshot's sidekicks figure in to the action nicely too: Rocket Willfly can be called upon for flight,

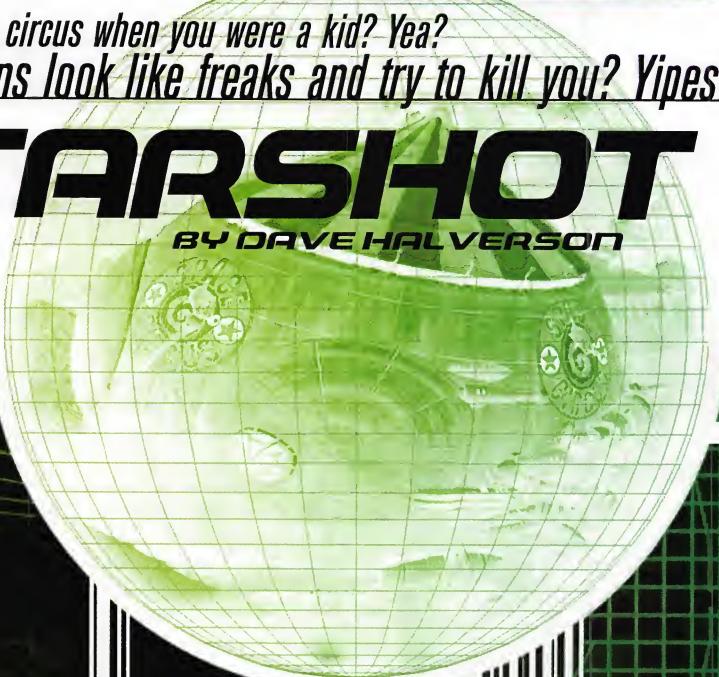
and Willfall to help Starshot negotiate with the many peculiar inhabitants of the strange worlds they explore. Each diverse landscape, ranging from vast plains to complex armature, is doused generously with enigmatic platforming fare in the old-school tradition, where frequent do-overs are both necessary and welcome. Character design, too, is in full effect, with an emphasis on the bizarre. Substance abuse of some kind must have played a part in the creation of some of Starshot's creatures (like the Surprise Laying Bird!) and their dialects, a mixture of synthesized squeaks and beeps that works surprisingly well. In the PC game, English is



*Ever go to the circus when you were a kid? Yea?
Did the clowns look like freaks and try to kill you? Yipes!*

STARSHOT

BY DAVE HALVERSON



the main language, so chalk up the 64 game's babble to memory constraints. Another big plus is Starshot's extremely user-friendly manual camera, which allows the player full control up, down, left and right at all times—great for jumping. Yet another plus is the welcome battery backup.

A needed commodity in a '90s platformer, the game is filled with mind benders as well, like starting an old abandoned car (from those old Earth days) and skillfully guiding it to a destination to use as a platform to reach a switch. Puzzle elements abound in Starshot and provide much of the game's peculiar charm. On the 64, however, these elements can conspire to adversely affect the gameplay. In one scene, Starshot enters a bar where he must start the juke box to get the tables to dance. Then, he'll need to shoot one, freezing it, and then push it to another one with a spook dancing on it. By getting the spook to jump sequential tables Starshot must lure him to a special spot to open up the floor. During this already frustrating task (the camera doesn't like closed quarters all that much) the frame rate sinks dramatically, making this task nearly impossible (though I finally did do it), especially as you descend deeper and enemies begin to appear to make matters worse. The PC version doesn't suffer this fate but the 64 unfortunately chugs quite a bit—definitely the game's Achilles heel.



At the end of the day I found Starshot enjoyable, in a surreal sort of way. It's definitely different. I recommend it with some reservation to N64 platform fans and whole-heartedly to the PC contingent. ⚡

*A good game on the 64, a very good game on PC...
Infogrames have delivered a unique new platformer to say the least!*



REPUBLIC SAYS...

■ DIVERSE, UNIQUE, AND ENTERTAINING STRUCTURE
■ COOL CHARACTER DESIGNS AND WACKY THEMES

■ FRAME RATE AN ISSUE IN THE 64 VERSION
■ SOME OF THE MUSIC IS PRETTY HURTIN'

PC
N64
B **C+**

PC GAMERS SHOULD EMBRACE THEIR FULLY FUNCTIONAL NEW CIRCUS FRIENDS; SO SHOULD N64 GAMERS THAT CAN LIVE WITH A FEW FLAWS.



STAR WARS EPISODE I: RACER

BY MIKE HOBBS

PHAKIN/SEEBULBER/GRASSNO/OLEGG HOLDFAST/ODY MANDRELL

00:00:00 SELECT A PILOT



Readers of this will no doubt have already seen the new Star Wars, a claim which I cannot make as of this writing, as the film remains a excruciating fortnight away. But I was thankfully distracted from the interminable wait by Lucasarts' Episode 1 Racer for N64 (also look for a forthcoming PC version). This insanely fast racer, built around the film's no doubt thrilling Podrace scene, succeeds as a fun game in its own right, much as Rogue Squadron did last Christmas. Like that game, Racer's Star Wars theme is simply the delectable icing on the cake.

In the film, the Podrace scene takes place on Tatooine, and obviously, a game designed around this concept needs a few more locales. With a liberal hand, Lucasarts have designed over twenty tracks from locations as diverse as Ord Ibanna, Ando Prime, and Aquilaris. There are some stunning-looking locations here, even if the polygon count is somewhat lacking at times, the price paid for the very high rates of speed reached in this game.

And that speed is what Racer is ultimately all about. It feels faster than the bullet-like F-Zero X because there is actually some scenery going by. The control, so important in a game this fast,

is spot-on, with satisfying physics at work as you snake through the often long and serpentine courses. Additionally, there is a drift control button, as well as an in-race engine repair facility, though you trade off some speed for this.

There are many racers and craft too that can be accessed here, most of which you can only catch fleeting glimpses of in the film. They run the usual performance gamut and all of them can be upgraded by buying or trading parts from the rough-talking Watto. This adds a nice element to the game, giving you something more to do than just race around the courses in one fixed craft.

Episode 1: Racer is Ram Expansion compatible, and I recommend you use it, as the game loses a lot graphically without it and becomes a bit of a murky blur. Apart from this caveat (and the fact that the two-player mode is almost too fast), this is a solid racing game with a great Star Wars theme. The Episode One juggernaut marches on. ➤



■ THRILLING SENSE OF SPEED
■ GREAT COURSE DESIGN

■ PLENTY OF TRACKS ON HAND
■ RAM PAK A MUST

REPUBLIC SAYS...

LIKE ROGUE SQUADRON BEFORE IT, EPISODE ONE RACER IS A GOOD GAME EVEN WITHOUT ALL THE STAR WARS TRAPPINGS. IT'S INSANELY FAST AND A RIGHT CHALLENGE.

B+



On the verge of a new Millennium,
the games are forever changing.
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A standard barcode is positioned at the bottom left. To its right, the text 'PENGUIN CLASSICS' is printed in a small, sans-serif font. Below this, the title 'The Art of War' is written in a larger, bold, sans-serif font. At the very bottom, the author's name 'Sun Tzu' is printed in a smaller, regular sans-serif font.

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Three small images are displayed horizontally. The first image on the left shows a shark swimming in the ocean. The middle image shows a woman with long, light-colored hair. The third image on the right shows a beach scene with a small boat and a person sitting on the sand.

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Impressive car models and surprisingly complex 3D tracks
One of the N64's best racing games takes on the PS champion, GT

WORLD DRIVER CHAMPIONSHIP

BY MIKE HORRIS

I was enamored with World Driver the first time I played it. In my initial run, I was playing it on my twenty-inch quick-evaluation monitor and was duly impressed with the first two courses I encountered, Rome and Kyoto. The courses looked absolutely gorgeous. The Kyoto track had this wonderful, overcast atmosphere and impressive stretches of road through darkened cityscapes. The draw distance was good and the trackside detail was very high with each individual course offering up a pleasant mix of scenery. Even better was a hi-res mode that required no

RAM Pak but severely letterboxed the action. Once I got the game to a full-size monitor, though, the honeymoon began to sour. For all its detail, this is a grainy looking racer, with an occasionally distracting frame rate drop as

you round certain corners. It looks good overall, but something like Beetle Adventure Racing is cleaner. And to make matters worse, the control slowly began to get on my nerves.

The first cars I had access to felt sluggish and slow to respond to my control inputs. I wasn't too alarmed by this just yet, as I knew that further play would open up other teams and upgraded cars. To my dismay, however, I soon realized that the game simply had unrewarding control. This may boil down to personal preference more than anything, but I could never get a car to react the way I wanted it to. One can never fling a car into a nice juicy powerslide. Instead, powerslides just sort of happen in an artificial and uninspiring way. Holding left or right on the stick will produce a slide nearly as severe as applying full throttle to a pair of unloaded rear wheels. In this game, a car will just lazily slide through a turn with too little sideways traction. There's no sense of urgency here, no immediacy to the control that exemplifies racers from Namco and Sega. Those are lofty ideals of video game racing control to be sure, but they exist for all to experience, players and developers alike.

GT1
GT2





World Driver offers high-res widescreen-type views, and all replays are shown this way (left, bottom). The camera choices are pretty good here, tracking some of the more exciting moments of the race in a Gran Turismo-like fashion. The split-screen mode (above) is impressive.

However, within this bubble of complaints, there is actually fun to be had here, a testament I suppose to the experience of Boss Studios. For instance, the very way in which World Driver is set up is enjoyable. You start with a few different teams to choose from, each offering up a unique style of car. In lieu of actual licenses, you'll encounter simulacra of racing-spec Porsche 911s, Lotus Esprits, Dodge Vipers, and Ford Mustangs, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. As you win races, you earn points. The more points you amass, the higher your profile becomes as a driver, and the greater the chance that you'll be courted by other teams, who'll offer up their best rides in exchange for a switch in loyalty. These points also open more and more challenging races, giving a nice curve to the difficulty level, as well as providing a constant supply of attainable goals.

Competitively speaking, the computer cars always offer up a good challenge, forcing you to learn the courses well to have any chance of winning. The two player mode is good too, again offering up a choice of hi- and normal-res modes, though you can only race one-on-one. Another enjoyable aspect of World Driver is the

aggressiveness with which you can drive, earning places by nudging cars into walls and plowing into them from behind, sending them spinning off into the trackside. However, this also exemplifies the slightly schizophrenic nature of the game, as it can't quite seem to decide if it wants to be a straightforward arcade racer or a buttoned-down sim.

It's sad to me that owners of the N64 can't get anything approaching R4 or Gran Turismo on the system, because those games make something like World Driver seem like an also-ran. But for the genre on the system, World Driver has enough going for it to deserve a recommendation. The globe-trotting locations give the game some class, the replays are pretty good, and the game is ultimately enjoyable in spite of its slow control response. ➤

WORLD DRIVER

Championship

AP 15 7 TH
TOTAL TIME 00:26.43
LAP TIME 00:26.43

TOTAL RECORD 000:00.00
BEST LAP 000:00.00

064

REPUBLIC SAYS...

■ VERY GOOD, IF BLURRY, GRAPHICS
■ TRACKS ARE RESPLENDENT WITH DETAIL

■ SLOW-AS-MOLASSES CONTROL
■ CHEESY ROCK MUSIC

WORLD DRIVER IS A MIXED BAG, BUT PROVES WORTHWHILE DESPITE CONTROL THAT I FOUND SLUGGISH. I LIKED THE INTERNATIONAL LOCATIONS AND THE LOOK OF THE TRACKS.

B-



COUNTER + POINT



Hybrid Heaven Konami

As Reviewed By: Tom Stratton (page 66)

I SEE THE LIGHT, BUT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL I FEEL THE SAME AND FALSELY INFORMED.



- THE LEVELS ARE MASSIVE BUT MONOTONOUS.
- FIGHTING HINTS AT DEPTH, BUT THE FAR-TOO-FREQUENT ENCOUNTERS END WITH SIMPLE TECHNIQUE.

Brady Fiechter:

C

HYBRID HEAVEN IS AN EXAMPLE OF A GAME WITH BIG IDEAS AND STUNTED EXECUTION. SO MUCH ABOUT THE GAME IS GREAT IN THEORY, BUT NOTHING ABOUT THE GAME WAS HANDLED WITH ANY TOUCHES OF EXCITEMENT OR SKILL. THE BATTLES ARE HUGELY ORIGINAL, WITH A COOL INTERFACE AND TURN-BASED STRATEGY, BUT THE MASSIVE LISTS OF MOVES AND ITEMS THAT CAN BE DEPLOYED ARE SIMPLY WASTED EXCESS; FIND YOURSELF A FEW RUDIMENTARY KICKS AND PUNCH COMBINATIONS, AND YOU'LL WIN EVERY TIME. WHILE TECHNICALLY SOUND, THE MASSIVE LEVELS ARE DULLY ANTISEPTIC AND HOMOGENOUS, AND BLASTING A FEW MECHANICAL FOES WITH A TINY BLASTER WHILE NAVIGATING ONE ROOM AFTER THE NEXT, FIGHTING ONE GENETICALLY MUTATED CREATURE AFTER ANOTHER, IS A MECHANICAL MARCH THROUGH MEDIOCRITY.



- A SOLID 3D ADVENTURE, LONG AND INVOLVING.
- STRANGE FIGHTING ENGINE HAMPERS THE GAME'S FLOW.

Dave Halverson:

C+

FIRST OF ALL... WHAT AN INTRO! FOR AN N64 GAME, WHW! HYBRID HEAVEN HAS A LOT GOING FOR IT, LIKE A SOLID 3D ENGINE, AN EXCEPTIONAL STORY, AND A LONG IMMERSIVE QUEST WITH A GOOD AMOUNT OF SURPRISE TWISTS AND TURNS, SUCH AS THE PERILOUS CHASE SCENE IN LEVEL 4. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN AN EFFORT TO BE DIFFERENT I THINK THE GAME'S DESIGNERS MAY HAVE TAKEN A WRONG TURN WITH THE DRAWN-OUT WRESTLING-STYLE FIGHTING INTERFACE. NOT BEING ABLE TO QUICKLY POUND FOES IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS DOES BECOME SOMEWHAT OF A PAIN, ALTHOUGH BEING ABLE TO DO SO AT ALL TIMES WOULD MAKE IT SOMEWHAT OF A BEAT-'EM-UP, AND WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE, SO I CAN SEE WHERE THEY WERE GOING. PERHAPS A MIXTURE OF THE TWO WOULD HAVE BEEN THE TICKET.



Lunar SSS working designs·Gamearts

As Reviewed By: Dave Halverson (pages 68,69)

WORKING DESIGNS HAVE ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET FOR GAMEARTS' FULLY REALIZED VERSION OF LUNAR WITH STUNNING RESULTS. A MUST-OWN RPG.



- THIS IS A GAME FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO REVISIT THE CLASSICS.
- IT'S NOT A TREAT FOR THE EYES, BUT THE HAND-DRAWN ART CREATES A CONVINCING AND CHARMING WORLD.

Brady Fiechter:

B+

I PLACED THE ORIGINAL LUNAR ON SEGA CD IN MY LIST OF 20 ALL-TIME FAVORITE GAMES. IN THIS PLAYSTATION VERSION—AN EXTENSIVE RETOOLING WITH RICH COLOR, REDRAWN ENEMIES, ALTERED STORY ARC AND ENVIRONMENT CHANGES—THE HEART OF LUNAR IS BEATING AS STRONG AS EVER. IN MANY REGARDS, THE GAME COULD BE VIEWED AS A BIT OUTDATED, AND YET FOR ALL THE INNOVATIONS AND 32-BIT TRIMMINGS OF RECENT RPGs LIKE LEGEND OF LEGIA AND STAR OCEAN, LUNAR HAD ME MUCH MORE INVOLVED IN ITS CHARMING WORLD. SOME OF THE GAME'S EFFECT COMES FROM NOSTALGIA, BUT THIS FINELY CRAFTED RPG RETURNS TO THE BASICS—A GOOD STORY WITH INTERESTING CHARACTERS AND FOCUSED TASKS.



- TOTALLY OLD-SCHOOL DESIGN AND PLAY MECHANICS, YET HIGHLY ENJOYABLE AND ACCESSIBLE GAMEPLAY.
- GREAT, INNOCENT AND CAPTIVATING STORYLINE STRENGTHENED BY COOL CHARACTERS MAINTAINS INTEREST.

Mike Griffin:

C

SO MANY PEOPLE MISSED THE ORIGINAL LUNAR ON SEGA CD. BACK THEN, IT WAS AN EPIC RPG RELEASE. GAME ARTS WAS A YOUNG COMPANY, ON THE MOVE AFTER THE HUGE HYPE SURROUNDING THEIR 3D SHOOTER SILPHED, AND THE MASTERPIECE THAT WAS LUNAR CONFIRMED THEIR SUPERIORITY. NOW U.S. GAMERS CAN EXPERIENCE THIS EXCELLENT RPG IN A COMPARATIVELY "DELUXE" PACKAGE. THE GRAPHICS ARE TOTALLY REDONE, THE MUSIC IS REMIXED AND ENHANCED, AND THE LOADING IS OBVIOUSLY MUCH BETTER. BEST OF ALL, HOWEVER, IS THE ADDITION OF SEVERAL COOL MINI-QUESTS, ENEMIES, AND STORY TIE-INS. WD'S INCREDIBLE BOX STANDARDS COUPLED WITH A FINE TRANSLATION EQUALS QUALITY OLD-SCHOOL RPG.



Quake II Raster Productions·Activision

As Reviewed By: Brady Fiechter (page 70-71)

THIS RESPECTABLE CONVERSION OF THE PC STALWART IS VISUALLY IMPRESSIVE, PLAYS WELL, FOSTERS SUPREME SENSE OF DOOM, AND PULLS OFF GOOD DEATHMATCH PLAY.



- SLIGHT FPS PROBLEMS CAN CAUSE MENTAL STRAIN AND FRUSTRATE EGOS.
- GREAT AMBIENT SOUNDS HELP SET THE DARK MOOD.

Tom Stratton:

B-

THERE'S NOT A WHOLE LOT WRONG WITH THIS GAME. IT IS WHAT IT IS, A GAME OF UNADULTERATED WHOLESALE KILLING. THE VISUALS ARE INSPIRING AND ENROSSING, BUT THE FPS CAN CAUSE MIGRAINES IN CERTAIN SECTIONS. MY ONLY OTHER FUSS IS THE CHUNKY POSITIONING OF THE GUN CROSSHAIRS. IT TAKES LIBERAL STEPS TO ADJUST THUMB TWITCHES TO A SCIENCE. ONCE YOU'VE TAILORED THESE TWO ISSUES AND COME TO GRIPS WITH THEM, THE GAME BECOMES TIGHT. THE FOUR-PLAYER DEATHMATCH WILL BE THE FLAVOR OF SLEEPOVERS WITH PLENTY OF VARIETY AND FULFILLMENT IN BEING THE LONE SURVIVOR.



- ALL NEW ONE-PLAYER GAME IS EXCELLENT. GREAT AMBIENCE!
- IT'S STILL A GUN SWINGER AT THE END OF THE DAY.

Dave Halverson:

B

AS MOST PEOPLE KNOW, I'M NOT A BIG FAN OF SWINGIN' GUN GAMES. WITH A SERIOUS LACK OF PLAY MECHANICS AND PERSONALITY, THEY SEEM GEARED MORE TOWARDS MULTI-PLAYER MAYHEM THAN LONG INVOLVED ONE-PLAYER SESSIONS. MY LIST OF EXCEPTIONS—SUCH AS HALF LIFE, TUROK (1), GOLDENEYE, AND DISRUPTOR—JUST GOT A LITTLE LONGER; HOWEVER, BECAUSE QUAKE II HAS BEEN ALTERED FOR THE 64, AND IS A RESPECTABLY IMMERSIVE ONE-PLAYER GAME, WITH SERIOUS AMBIENCE AND INTRIGUING LEVEL DESIGN. FAR BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL OFFERING ON THE 64, I LIKED THIS ONE AS MUCH OR MORE AS THE COOL 2D SPRITE-BASED DOOM 64. GOOD STUFF.



R-Type Delta • Irem • Agetec

As Reviewed By: Mike Hobbes (pages 78-79)

ITEM COME THROUGH WITH THE MOST ENJOYABLE AND BEST LOOKING R-TYPE YET. THANK AGETEC FOR BRINGING THIS ONE STATESIDE, AS IT'S A MUST-PURCHASE FOR SHOOTER FANS.

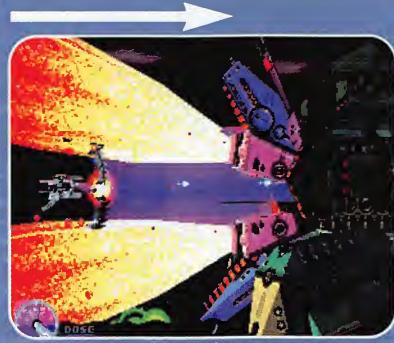
A-

- THE MUSIC BRINGS ADDED RESONANCE TO THE INVENTIVE DEEP-SPACE ENVIRONMENTS - THE BEST I'VE HEARD IN A SHOOTER.
- FROM THE STYLE TO THE EFFECTS TO THE DESIGN, THIS GAME IS A VISUAL POWERHOUSE.

Brady Fiechter:

R-

R-Type Delta IS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT FAITHFULLY TRANSPORTING A CLASSIC GAME INTO A SPARKLING 32-BIT WORLD. POLYGONS HAVE REPLACED THE SPRITES OF OLD, MASSIVE EFFECTS SHOWER THE IMAGINATIVE ENVIRONMENTS, BUT THE GAME DOES NOT SACRIFICE THE CLASSIC AND DISTINCT PLAYABILITY OF AN OLD R-TYPE. DIPPING INTO MORE PATTERN-ORIENTED PLAY MECHANICS, **R-Type Delta** USES MEMORIZATION AND DELIBERATE MANEUVERING THROUGHOUT THE POCKETS OF SAFE ZONES TO BUILD ITS METHOD OF GAMEPLAY. THE UNIQUE STRATEGIES OF USING THE PODS AS SHIELDS AND KEY ADDITIONAL POINTS OF WEAPONS FIRE TAKE THIS HIGHLY ENTERTAINING SHOOTER TO THE BEST-ON-PLAYSTATION CATEGORY.



- ALL OF THE TRADEMARK R-TYPE NUANCES ARE THERE FOR THE LOVING.
- SPECTACULAR PRESENTATION. POLYGONAL 3D AT ITS FINEST.

Dave Halverson:

A-

2D SHOOTING DOESN'T GET MUCH BETTER. JOINING THE EXALTED STATUS OF THUNDERFORCE IV, EINHÄNDER, AND G-DARIUS, **R-Type Delta** IS NOTHING SHORT OF SPECTACULAR. WHAT HAS ALWAYS MADE R-TYPE GAMES SO SPECIAL IS IN FULL EFFECT HERE, THAT BEING THE SHIP'S POD WHICH CAN BE MANIPULATED IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS WORKING IN CONCERT WITH THE SLOW, METHODICAL GAMEPLAY, WHERE NOOKS AND CRANNYS BECOME YOUR ONLY REFUGE FROM NOT CHEAP PEBBLES, BUT A WONDERFUL ARRAY OF ALIEN VERMIN AND POWERFUL BEAMING WEAPONRY. THE POLYGON WORK IS EXCEPTIONAL, THE EFFECTS A JOY, AND THE DIFFICULTY IS CRANKED ON HIGH. **R-Type Delta** IS EVERYTHING A GREAT SHOOTER NEEDS TO BE: BEAUTIFUL, LONG, AUDIBLY DELICIOUS, AND FILLED WITH GORGEOUS BOSSSES.



Starshot • Infogrames • Infogrames

As Reviewed By: Dave Halverson (page 78-79)

PC GAMERS SHOULD EMBRACE THEIR FULLY FUNCTIONAL NEW CIRCUS FRIENDS; SO SHOULD N64 GAMERS THAT CAN LIVE WITH A FEW FLAWS.

B

C+

- PRETTY GRAPHICS DO NOT HELP SAVE THE GAME FROM THE ENGINE HICUSS.
- THE FREE-ROAMING ENVIRONMENTS HAVE AN AWFUL LOT OF FLOATING PATHS TO FOLLOW.

Tom Stratton:

C

IF THE GAME WERE IN ITS BETA FORM, I WOULD SAY THAT THERE IS HOPE. THE ART AND CHARACTER DESIGNS ARE UNIQUE, USING SOME INTERESTING COLOR SCHEMES. I CAN ALSO SAY NICE THINGS ABOUT THE MUSIC, GIVING A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT MOOD-SETTING FLAVORS. EACH LEVEL HAS ITS OWN LOOK, BUT THEY ALL FEEL THE SAME. AIMING AT ENEMIES BECOME DIFFICULT; GLADLY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO STEER YOUR ATTACKS TO THEIR DESTINATION. THESE REWARDING ASPECTS OF THE GAME ARE HINDERED BY THE INFECTIOUS DEFICIENCIES OF JERKY FRAME RATE AND SERIOUS CAMERA ISSUES. IF THE GAME INFLUENCE DID NOT CALL FOR CONSTANT JUMPING FROM FLOATING PLATFORM TO FLOATING PLATFORM, THESE PROBLEMS WOULDN'T BE AS OBVIOUS.



- GREAT CHARACTER DESIGN, MUSIC, AND UNUSUAL VISUAL STYLE.
- THE FRAME RATE AND LACK OF POLISH GREATLY UNDERMINE THE GAME'S POSITIVES.

Brady Fiechter:

C

Starshot HAS A HALLUCINATORY ATMOSPHERE, FOSTERED BY A UNIQUE COLOR SCHEME, BIZARRE CHARACTER DESIGNS AND SPACEY MUSIC. THE MAIN CHARACTER IS ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING DESIGNS I'VE SEEN IN A 3D PLATFORMER ON THE NINTENDO 64, AND I QUITE ENJOYED THE IDEA OF MANIPULATING THE TRAJECTORY OF WEAPON FIRE AS IT TRAVELED TOWARD THE TARGET. AND I LIKED THE PUZZLE ELEMENTS AND CLASSIC PLAY MECHANICS, WHICH REQUIRED PRECISION FLIGHTS ON A ROCKET AND PRECARIOUS JUMPS FROM VACILLATING PLATFORMS. THE TASKS YOU DO VARY CONSIDERABLY IN EACH AREA, BUT DESPITE ALL THE COMPETENT IDEAS IN THE GAME, A CONSIDERABLE LACK OF POLISH AND DESTRUCTIVELY BAD FRAME RATE SABOTAGED ANY HOPE OF GOOD FUN.



World Driver Championship • Boss Games Studio • Midway

As Reviewed By: Mike Hobbes (page 82-83)

WORLD DRIVER IS A MIXED BAG, BUT PROVES WORTHWHILE DESPITE CONTROL THAT I FOUND SLUGGISH. I LIKED THE INTERNATIONAL LOCATIONS

B-

- GORGEOUS GRAPHICS, GOOD TRACKS, AND CHALLENGING GAMEPLAY WITH A NATURAL PROGRESSION.
- CONTROL IS A LITTLE TOO STRICT, AND THE N64'S ANALOG STICK IS WAY TOO TWITCHY FOR ACCURATE DRIVING.

Edd Fear

B

I LOVE DRIVING; HENCE, I LOVE DRIVING GAMES. MY PS WORKS OVERTIME RUNNING GT, RR, AND NFS, AND I'VE WAITED PATIENTLY FOR A DECENT RACER ON THE N64. FINALLY, I'VE BEEN REWARDED WITH **WORLD DRIVER CHAMPIONSHIP**: WELL-THOUGHT-OUT TRACKS, A GOOD COLLECTION OF VEHICLES, AND GAMEPLAY THAT GETS TOUGHER AS YOU GAIN SKILLS. THE MINOR FRAMERATE CHUGS DON'T EVEN PHASE ME (HAVE YOU PLAYED *High Stakes* on PS? ACK!). MY ONLY BEEF IS THAT THE RULES OF PHYSICS ARE FOLLOWED A LITTLE TOO CLOSELY, WHICH MAKES IT LESS OF AN ARCADE-Y TITLE AND REQUIRES REAL SKILLS. THAT, AND THE N64'S ANALOG STICK SUCKS ROCKS FOR DRIVING GAMES. STILL, I'LL PLAY THE WHEELS OFF **WDC** UNTIL A GREAT N64 DRIVING GAME COMES ALONG. SOON, PLEASE?



- A THOROUGHbred, DEEP, IMMERSIVE SIMULATION WITH GREAT VISUALS.
- FRAME RATE SPUTTERS JUST A TAD AND NO RAM PAK OPTION.

Dave Halverson:

B+

THE 64 FINALLY GETS THE REAL DEAL IN TERMS OF A HARDCORE REALISTIC RACING SIMULATION. I WOULDN'T GO AS FAR AS COMPARING IT TO KING TURISMO, BUT I WILL SAY THAT IT'S THE BEST SIM FOR THE SYSTEM YET, AND A KICK IN THE PANTS TO BOOT. BESIDES LONG, METICULOUSLY DESIGNED AND DETAILED COURSES, **WORLD DRIVER** TAKES ON A UNIQUE FEEL DUE TO THE TEAM FACTOR. AS YOU PROGRESS IN THE GAME ON A GIVEN TEAM, OTHERS WILL ATTEMPT TO HEADHUNT YOU AND YOUR WINNING WAYS. TAKE THEM UP ON THEIR OFFER AND WATCH YOUR CURRENT SPONSOR GROVEL! IT'S TOO BAD THE GAME BEGAN PRODUCTION POST-RAM PAK. A HI-RES MODE IS OFFERED, BUT THE LETTERBOX FORMAT HIDES MUCH OF THE BEAUTY AND HITS THE FRAME RATE JUST A LITTLE. OVERALL THOUGH, **WORLD DRIVER** IS A FULLY REALIZED, SUPER-IMMERSIVE RACER THAT NO N64 RACE FAN SHOULD BE WITHOUT.

- I. ZELDA: The Ocarina of Time
2. CASTLEVANIA: SotN
3. GUARDIAN HEROES
4. CRASH BANDICOOT
5. SUPER MARIO 64
6. ZELDA: A Link to the Past
7. BANJO KAZOOIE
8. SONIC ADVENTURE
9. GUNSTAR HEROES
10. MISCHIEF MAKERS

- II. SUPER METROID
2. SUPER MARIO WORLD
3. DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2
4. SUPER GHOULS 'n GHOSTS
5. CASTLEVANIA IV
6. EARTHWORM JIM
7. TOMB RAIDER
8. SONIC the HEDGEHOG
19. ASTAL
20. CHAOTIX/WARIO LAND



HOPPED ON EPONA'S BACK AND WENT RIDING ACROSS HYRULE FIELD I KNEW THAT IT WOULD TAKE A MIRACLE TO TOP ZELDA: THE OCARINA OF TIME. THE AMOUNT OF ELEMENTS IN THIS GAME AND HOW FINELY CRAFTED AND THOUGHT THROUGH EACH IS SERVES AS A TESTAMENT TO MR. MIYAMOTO AND HIS AMAZING TEAM. THE KING OF ALL VIDEO GAMES, ZELDA.

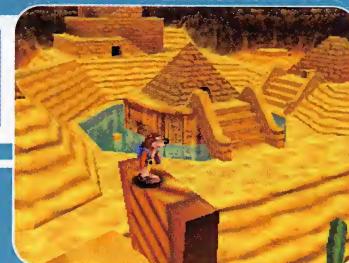


#1. ZELDA: ToO-T-

THE FIRST TIME I
WENT RIDING ACROSS HYRULE FIELD I KNEW THAT IT WOULD TAKE A MIRACLE TO TOP ZELDA: THE OCARINA OF TIME. THE AMOUNT OF ELEMENTS IN THIS GAME AND HOW FINELY CRAFTED AND THOUGHT THROUGH EACH IS SERVES AS A TESTAMENT TO MR. MIYAMOTO AND HIS AMAZING TEAM. THE KING OF ALL VIDEO GAMES, ZELDA.



To say the least, compiling a top-twenty after seven years of publishing was difficult. The amount of games that I have thoroughly enjoyed and respect hovers around 100. What this list represents are games that have transcended time for me personally, older games that have retained their vitality through the years, and new titles that I believe I'll feel the same way about in the years to come. Of course, with the Dreamcast about to explode onto the scene and three RARE games just around the corner, this list will likely evolve in the near future. But I guess that's the nature of any time-sensitive list; it can only represent the brief time slot in which it is created. So here it is, for better or for worse. Twenty's a tie because I had to get my Virtual Boy pick in, and Landstalker just missed the cut.



DAVE HALVERSON

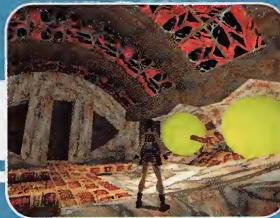
Legend of Zelda T.O.O.T. //

1. CASTLEVANIA: SotN
2. SUPER MARIO 64
3. SUPER METROID
4. FINAL FANTASY !!!
5. CASTLEVANIA IV
6. RESIDENT EVIL
7. TOMB RAIDER
8. SUPER MARIO WORLD
9. ZELDA: The Ocarina of Time
10. SNATCHER

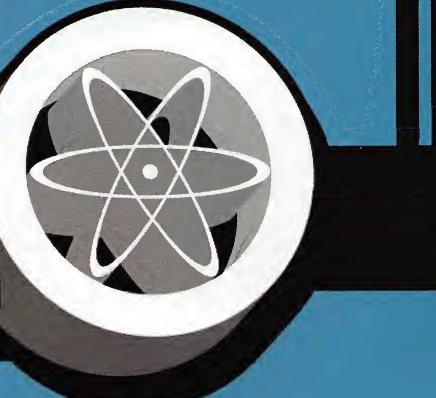
11. CHRONO TRIGGER
12. SONIC CD
13. DONKEY KONG COUNTRY
14. LUNAR: Silver Star
15. CRASH BANDICOOT
16. GUARDIAN HEROES
17. SILENT HILL
18. JUMPING FLASH
19. WIPEOUT
20. DOOM



#1. CASTLEVANIA: SotN - It's rich gothic styling is visual poetry, it's uncommonly poignant music beautifully resonant. Symphony of the Night takes 2D game design to a remarkable order, borrowing bits from some of gaming's finest titles - the interconnected castle chambers hint of Metroid, the role playing elements of Faxannadu, the action of any great Castlevania of the past. It is important to experience games like this, in order to remind oneself that the truly great video games are capable of delivering transcendence.



Some of my fondest moments playing video games travel back to when video games were just beginning—Zaxxon and Donkey Kong on Coleco—and some time later, with the 8-bit days of NES, Castlevania, Contra and Bionic Commando. But when compiling my top 20 list, I kept returning to games of this decade. These are the games that reach ineffable greatness. As we enter the next ten years of gaming and technology affords previously unfathomable depths of design, I look forward to seeing where gaming takes us next.

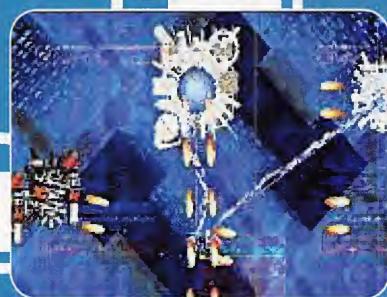


BRADY FIECHTER

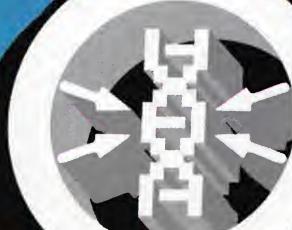
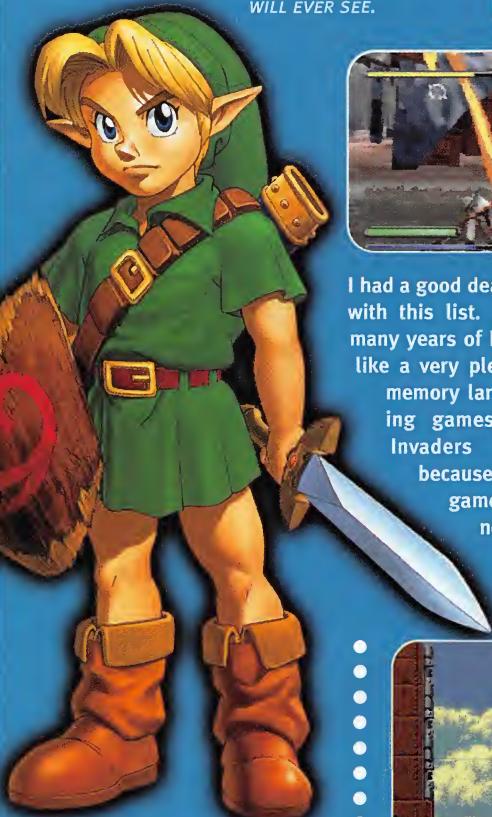
Castlevania: S.O.T.N.

1. ZELDA: The Ocarina of Time
2. METAL GEAR SOLID
3. SUPER MARIO 64
4. RADIANT SILVERGUN
5. NIGHTS
6. YOSHI'S ISLAND
7. METROID
8. PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI
9. GUNSTAR HEROES
10. RAGE RACER

11. THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
12. SUPER MARIO WORLD
13. SUPER MARIO KART
14. STARFOX 64
15. STREET FIGHTER ZERO 2
16. SUPER MARIO BROS. 3
17. GRAN TURISMO
18. CASTLEVANIA: SOTN
19. SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
20. PANZER DRAGOON SAGA



I had a good deal of fun coming up with this list. Looking back on many years of happy gaming was like a very pleasant stroll down memory lane. I left out defining games such as Space Invaders and Pac-Man because I wanted a list of games that were all so good they could be played even now and be rightfully enjoyed without having to rely solely on nostalgia for charm. Yes, my list is big on action and short on RPGs, but that accurately reflects my tastes. I'm afraid I've also made an exclusively Japanese list. Sue me, America.



MIKE HOBBS

Legend of Zelda T.O.O.T. //

1. NIGHTS
2. GUARDIAN HEROES
3. PHANTASY STAR: The Series
4. EVERQUEST
5. TEMPEST 2000
6. METAL GEAR SOLID
7. POWER STONE
8. SONIC CD
9. WONDERBOY 3
10. STREETS OF RAGE 2

11. SHINING FORCE 3 TRILOGY
12. STRIDER
13. GUNSTAR HEROES
14. SAMURAI SHODOWN 2
15. SONIC ADVENTURE
16. RADIANT SILVERGUN
17. VIGILANTE 8
18. HEAVY BARREL
19. FINAL FIGHT
20. SLIME WORLD (8 player)

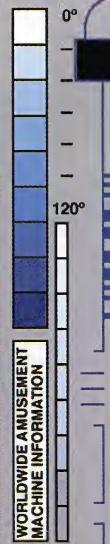


The Phantasy Star series is legendary as far as I'm concerned; A genre-defining 8-bit masterpiece, a stunning 16-bit sequel, an abstract yet enjoyable third game, and a powerful finalizing fourth PS. Forever memorable. EverQuest is a no brainer. It matches the depth of the best RPGs, tells a fantastic unwritten tale provided by thousands of real-life players, and guides you through a truly adventuresome campaign without boundaries for months on end. Rounding out my top five is Tempest 2000. Jeff Minter's luscious 3D masterpiece convinced the Jaguar to commit true 64-bit mischief, pouring on insane graphics, speed, and the most amazing cartridge-based soundtrack of all time. When I look at the rest of the list it simply confirms why I love games so much.



MIKE GRIFFIN

Nights: Into Dreams



arcade corner

CYBER TROOPERS VIRTUAL-ON ORATORIO TANGRAM M.S.B.S. VS.4

Without a doubt, one of the hottest games in Japanese arcades for the past few years has been SEGA's Virtual-On Orotorio Tangram. Powered by two Model 3 Step 2 boards, Virtual-On OT certainly has the most spectacular arcade graphics ever seen, yet the visual effects are so intense that a single screen shot fails to do this game justice. Gameplay is fast and furious with intuitive controls, making it easy to get to grips with the control of your Virtuaroid. Even beginners will be able to execute some stunning attacks without much effort, while those after hardcore action will find that underneath the simple control system is a diverse range of attacks and movement that will take ages to master.

Since its release AM3 have continued to fine tune the game balance with minor version upgrades and the latest edition, M.S.B.S. Ver 5.4, has just been released, so we're taking the opportunity to re-introduce the game to you again before we get the first news of the Dreamcast conversion.

Far into Earth's future the DNA company managed to create a huge weapon of vast destruction called the Moon Gate. However, at the same time a rival company, called RNA, challenged DNA for control of Earth's key installations, and a war quickly ensued. Both companies claimed right of ownership to various industrial plants and in order to strengthen their strategic position, DNA and RNA began fighting each other to try and capture these areas. But as they approached the climax of the war, suddenly one of the plants which held the main system of the TANGRAM (Space Time Causation Control Mechanism) vanished from the normal space-time continuum!

Considering that it had the ability to operate the Moon Gate, the loss of this plant meant catastrophic danger to the Earth. The company that is able to discover and possess the missing plant will certainly be able to seize the initiative in the war's stalemate situation.

Both companies possess Virtuaroid cyber troopers. You take control of one of these factions and fight your rival over various missions until you finally win control of the Moon Gate. Each mission sends you to a different plant where your objective is to defeat your opponent's Virtuaroid and secure that location.

Each location is guarded by a different Virtuaroid and there is a wide variety of terrain, so you'll need to use different tactics for each mission.



1PLAYER DNA SIDE RVR-14 Fei-Yen Kn





1PLAYER D.N.A. SIDE
MBU-707-G
TEMJIN



Sega have produced a new amusement machine, Virtual-On Oratorio Tangram Special, which is now at Shinjuku Joypolis, Tokyo. The cabinet moves and shakes in response to the VirtuaRoid's movement and attacks for a thrilling ride.



Designed by Hajime Katoki, a very famous and respected designer in Japan, all 12 VirtuaRoids have been modeled so that each one's unique characteristics enhance the gameplay considerably.



Republic
Sega's Arcade Division

GR12

03144107950

ACE

ARCADE CORNER '99
全世界遊戲機器情報

VOL 2 • JULY 1999

**WAR** Beat down Friend and Foe...
at your neighborhood arcade!

As arcades slide deeper and deeper into obsolescence due to the impending arrival of the new millennium's super consoles, operators and designers are going to have to find new ways to get people in to their establishments. Atari games latest stroke of genius involves network style gameplay...without the network. The coin-op answer to Quake, War: Final Assault, brings mission and deathmatch-style gaming to the arcade. Once upon a time Street Fighter started an arcade religion that lasted for years and spawned countless sequels. I suppose Atari's ultimate goal is to once again find that magic pill, the perfect mix of graphics and vs. gameplay to drive the competitive spirit into a quarter-spouting frenzy. Our die-hard Quake players respect what Atari have attempted but think that their infamous touch doesn't belong in a death-dealing environment. War's color and vibrance undermine the sense of doom exhibited in Quake. They also feel that the control, comparatively, isn't up to par, especially in the lateral movement department. Having played for years with customizable mouse and keyboard configurations, this really comes as no surprise. Everyone liked the third-person camera, premise, cast of characters and features, though, and players who aren't fully submerged into the world of first-person shooters on PC took a shine to War. Personally, I don't think Atari are trying to mirror Quake, but rather create a game that takes Quake-like gameplay

aspects and blends them into a more arcade-friendly setting. It can be argued that any swingin' gun game is mimicking Quake, so I can't necessarily judge a game based on how well it copies the king of first-person shooters, but rather what it brings of its own – and War brings a lot.



In War's Mission play, players can team up in a story-driven 30-minute-long game (including 5-6 bosses) and there's a hidden level and final boss accessible only if you find all six hidden "pentabolt" pieces. While there are initially four death-match arenas, one will be added every three weeks, until 12 exist, giving War 36 weeks worth of fresh gameplay. So now arcade goers can have their Quake and eat it too...



21441 07050

Don't let the pleated skirt fool you!



Evil Zone™

You're about to get a lesson in Pain 101. Lea is evil and it's your task to conquer her. Select one of nine characters and fight the others until the final battle. With amazing animated special maneuver sequences and state of the art graphics, you'll find Evil Zone to be the master of all fighting games. No butts about it.





world republic

[i] Traditionally, May is a slow game release month in Japan, and as you can see, not much has changed. Among this month's releases, however, Omega Boost, Bust a Groove 2, and Rasetu No Ken (Soul of the Samurai) were most enjoyable, and they're all headed our way.

World Republic Review • developer **polyphony digital** publisher **sony** • available in japan now

omega boost



Sony's 60fps mech shooter is a joy to behold – and it's closing in on a U.S. release!

It would seem that Polyphony Digital have more talents than were dreamt of in our philosophy. The makers of Gran Turismo, arguably one of the finest driving games of all time, have now staked out a claim in the 3D shooter genre. This endeavor has yielded an immensely playable, straightforward shooter with some of the most thrilling action yet experienced on the PS.

Omega Boost opens with an elaborate FMV intro, which—curiously for a Japanese title—features a Wing Commander-ish mix of live actors and rendered backdrops. The odd and entirely incidental story has you travelling back in time to replace a vacuum tube in the old ENIAC computer from the 1950s. What this means to you is nine levels of arcade speed shooting and the best approximation of a balls-out anime space battle yet seen. That last description is telling, as Macross designer Shoji Kawamori designed the craft in Omega Boost and acted as an overall supervisor.

The action in Omega Boost is divided up into three different types of stages: deep space, planet surface, and tunnel. All feature the same third- or first-person perspective (your choice) and beautifully liquid analog control, kept dutifully simple. Left alone, your mech is always moving forward, but a press of the R1 button will hold you in place, while the R2 button allows you face and rotate around your nearest target. As in Panzer Dragoon, moving your targeting cursor over enemies produces a series of lock-ons, whereupon a great salvo of missiles can be unleashed. Alternatively, quick pressing of the fire button produces a stream of rapid fire gun attacks. That's it. There are no power-ups of any kind, only a very powerful super weapon called a Viper Boost that slowly builds up throughout the levels.

Within this framework, Polyphony Digital have created a shooter of frenetic intensity. Whether skimming a planet's surface or zooming about in deep space, Omega Boost throws huge numbers of fast moving enemies on screen. You whip around like mad, targeting everything in sight while scads of lock-on missiles shoot forth from your mech's back. The lighting, reflection effects, and especially the animation of your mech, are all first rate, cementing Polyphony's reputation as miracle workers on the PlayStation.

There are dozens of extra missions that can be opened up once you complete the game, and you'll even be treated to fantastic replay mode, allowing you to thrill to the intensity as a bystander. The experience of Omega Boost is fleeting, but it needs to be experienced by shooter fans. >*<



A. Masterful detail is exhibited, especially considering the fluid frame rates. **B.** The scenarios offer good amounts of diversity and environmental factors. **C.** Bosses are large, patterned based, and don't go down easy. **D.** Lighting effects abound. Omega Boost trips the light fantastic!



World Republic says "The experience of Omega Boost is fleeting, but it needs to be experienced by all hardcore shooter fans." **B**



redline racer

Criterion's peculiar racer needs a little more work. Wait for the U.S. version on this one...



A. This dark cavern provides a showcase for Redline Racer's headlights! Nifty!
 B. 2D diorama trees are once again in effect. Why can't anyone make cool trees? C. Normally you don't see race bikes on dirt roads in the snow. Hmm.



World Republic says, "This one still needs some work and Ubisoft have assured us that they'll be ironing out the kinks for the DC's U.S. launch. As it stands..." C

How long has it been since you played a thoroughbred console arcade racer...on two wheels? Too long, if you ask me, and so it's high time one came along to fill the bill. Criterion Studios' Redline Racer almost does just that. In no way resembling a simulation, full-blooded road racers dash across road, sand and snow with a monotone engine hum that only vacillates when you hit the turbo-excel button for a burst of super speed, sending the front wheel in to the air as you fight to hang on. Four camera angles, 8 teams, 12 bikes, and over a dozen courses accent this highly playable straight racer. Comparing Redline to its PC twin, the biggest difference can be

found in the greatly improved soundtrack. Otherwise the two games are nearly identical, save the Dreamcast's textures, which seem richer in comparison. The main source of satisfaction is derived from the keen sense of speed that builds as you progress through the tournament mode, and the smooth han-

dling characteristics, made all the more buttery by the steady frame rate. The environments also come into play as the rigid suspension struggles with high speeds and contrasting terrain such as sand or snow. At super high speeds even the smallest ebb in the wet sand can send bike and rider flailing. While the game lacks the fine polish of a Sega Rally, with its minor collision problems and few bells and whistles, it could be a worthwhile purchase once UbiSoft work out the balance issue. You're usually either way out in front or getting smoked with little in between. Stay tuned for a U.S. review as soon as UbiSoft are good to go with their version. ♦

Playstation Review

cotton
GAME BY NUCLEUS

Before you decide to purchase Cotton: Fantastic Night Dreams Original on the basis that you want to stir the nostalgic side of your gaming emotions, consider that this is a conversion of an antiquated arcade version that never deserved to carry the Cotton name. I adore old-school games, but this lifeless, ugly, insufferably monotonous and perplexingly archaic shooter would struggle to compete with even the most rudimentary of shooters on an early 16-bit system. Play this game for fifteen minutes—about the time you'll need to complete it—and then pick up a copy of R-Type Delta or Radiant Silvergun to see how extraordinarily far a gap can be between a good game and a bad game. *

D-



Los Angeles
ロサンゼルス

Tokyo
東京





WORLD RXP .0534.566 349765 078.054
Playstation Preview
 cyber.org
 GAME BY SQUARE/ENIX

Sometimes a sibling has the aptitude to carry out tasks without the constant supervision of its parent. Other times it is of dire importance that the sibling has its parental guidance. Such is the case with Cyber Org. This 3D-action title has the player skirting around cyber-dungeons finding computer terminals to unlock transporters so that they can be warped to yet another one of these dungeons.

There are three characters the player needs to navigate through all the areas, each fitted with the commonly adopted image of galaxy warrior. Awful camera tooling, shallow game play and curtailed level design add up to crappy product.

D+



World Republic Review • developer metro • publisher enix • available in japan now
bust a move 2



Dance the night away with Sony's latest Groove ...

Whatever you may use to time every fourth beat, it pales in comparison to my "head bob" technique. Even with the more lenient timing in this PlayStation-boundary-pushing sequel, my "Just Timing" ability will win the day. The background will burst, deform, or completely disappear as we both lay down successful cool, chillin', and freeze combos. If you try to attack me (as you see the end approach), I'll either dodge it (if I like you) or attack right through it (if you're trying to actually win).

Ah, the gameplay changes in Bust A Move 2 add choruses of depth and skill to a game series that has proven that a dancing game can be as good as the best from the more accepted (i.e., over saturated) genres. Taking away the choice of combos and secret combos (as far as I know), there is now a Just Timing effect added to a perfectly timed button press. A perfect transition adds points (points play a big part in BAM2) to the combo and will take your dancer along a harder-command, higher-reward path on the character's combo flowchart. Easy, Normal, and Mix (all four joypad buttons can end a combo) modes of play plus a couple of very fast songs make this game a gas.

The music, handled by FBIJ, is not as catchy as the first, but it grew on me in a couple of games. The roster of dancers has changed with the times as well. The new boss, Pander, is traditional and taxing, with the fast beat in the game contrasted by the slowest dancer.



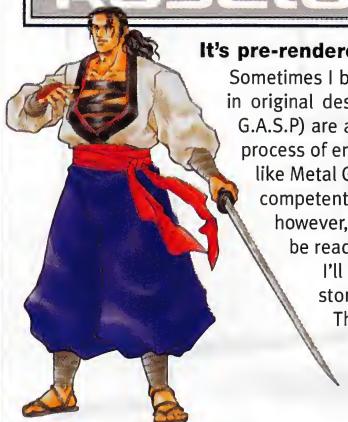
Hamm, Pinky, and Gas-O are missed, but Comet, Tsutomo, and Bi-O (think Thriller) fill the bill well. The added dance moves have caused the motion capture to be a bit under-exaggerated in comparison to BAM1; in addition, the 'moves busted' by a few characters has gone through an overhaul. Shorty bumps and grinds, Robo-Z Gold is an African whirlwind, and Hiro-kun has managed to increase his "mack factor" an entire order of magnitude. Finally, the backgrounds are awesome once the dancers get groovin', keeping the battle frantic, fantastic, and phenomenally fun.



A. That disco globe looks just like the one in Brady's office! **B.** The models look great and animate with skill.

World Republic says "This game is a sure-fire winner no matter what type of games you're into. Dancing games are here to stay. I can't wait to see Bust a Groove on PS2!" **B+**

World Republic Review • developer/publisher konami • available in japan now
Rasetu no Ken



It's pre-rendered backgrounds and survival adventure...Samurai-style!

Sometimes I believe that it is only the bigger Konami teams (like KCET) that lead in original design, while some of the lesser teams (like those responsible for G.A.S.P.) are apparently in charge of emulating other proven games. During that process of emulation, something is lost – a certain "crispness," perhaps. Games like Metal Gear Solid and Silent Hill are so crisp. They are original, refined, and competent throughout. Games like Rasetunoken (a.k.a. Soul of the Samurai), however, enter a genre already populated by proven favorites, and it may not be ready to take on the big boys.

I'll give Rasetu another chance to prove itself when I can follow the storyline perfectly in the upcoming U.S. version, Soul of the Samurai.

This pre-rendered BG game is very cinematic in its approach. For the time being, however, I can only criticize the lackluster gameplay. I'm coming to appreciate the effect that this cinematic approach can have on the flow of the gameplay. It's a quick-cutting (literally &

Japanese film-style) method of gameplay direction, and since the attacking/blocking/jumping is rather stiff, it becomes questionable. Hopefully the U.S. version will offer some tweaked gameplay.



World Republic says "While it's certainly not as interesting as I had hoped, this import version of Soul of the Samurai is fairly solid. That's about it, though. Average renders, animation, action. Stiff." **C**





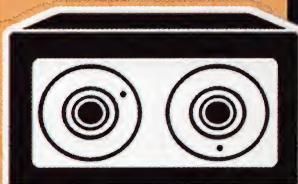
D.K. COUNTRY 2

[publisher] nintendo
 [genre] platformer
 [system] snes
 [year] 1995



As if they didn't peg it the first time out, RARE produced an even more legendary piece of platforming magic with their second offering in the DK universe, DKC 2. Still one of the most eclectic platformers in existence, this is one of gaming's greatest treasures. The addition of Dixie Kong in part two added the element of flight, and in the effects and play mechanics departments the RARE team pulled out all the stops. Line-scrolling madness covered the floors and beautiful water and lava flowed and transparent magic abounded. Play mechanics like classic start and stop, precise timing moves, swimming and, of course, team and buddy play (with Rambi the Rhino, Enguade the Swordfish, Squawks the Parrot, Ratty the Rattlesnake and more) made it a platformer's dream come true, from start to finish. Add to all of this one of the SNES's best soundtracks and a host of special areas, and, well, it all adds up to a game that's a whole lot better than almost anything in 3D... like RARE's new stuff and a few others. Can RARE transfer this magic to the Nintendo 64?

Jeez, I hope so. I need another classic platformer and fast! Hey, is it just me or did the magical Sony chip in the SNES produce better music than the 64? What's up with that?



AC-KNIVES

«retro video game assimilation»



"I'd buy that for a dollar!" Or fifty dollars, as the case may be. That's right, as soon as this version of Smash TV appeared I ran to the store to shell out the bucks. I knew the SNES version had to be the best home Smash TV... just look at the pad, that button configuration, – it was too perfect!

It was a tough decision, though, because there were so many amazing SFC and Megadrive imports screaming my name. There was no avoiding Smash TV. After leaving too many quarters in the arcade game, I desperately needed the home version to satiate my continuing hunger. Would I pass it up? "No Way!"

The SNES version was and is fantastic. Excellent graphics, tossing loads of sprites around with no slowdown, great music (close to the arcade), cool voices, and excellent—maybe perfect—control locked Smash TV into my system for many hours at a time. My friends and I were so into it that it was common to gloat whenever you had the most cash and prizes at the end of a level. Prizes like a 2600" TV, or A Year's Supply of Fresh Meat!

There's another reason why I think that Smash TV has earned its cult classic status: It has one of the coolest (in a totally cheesy way) themes for a shooter ever. It's like Running Man all the way, but with a wink and a sarcastic little twist Smash TV takes it to a more brutally comedic level...but I assure you, those last couple of levels are no joke. Track this one down, grab a buddy, and set up your SNES; big money and big prizes await. You'll love it.



SUPER SMASH T.U.

[publisher] acclaim
 [genre] shooting
 [system] snes
 [year] 1991

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QUEEN EMERALDAS

•1999 ADV FILMS
60 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by dave halverson



Story: The slender, streamlined physique of Emeraldas is one of the most exalted among female anime figures. Together with her ship, Queen Emeraldas, she combs the universe for love, honor, and vengeance, protecting those she trusts – and anyone who stands in the way, well, they just get dead. This 60 minute slice of brilliant anime was five years in the making, and it shows. Taking place after the death of Tochiro – the troll-like cloaked genius who built the Queen Emeraldas and Captain Harlock's legendary starship – the story revolves around a young boy with big dreams, Hiroshi, and a battle between two Queens, Baralooda and Emeraldas. Hiroshi's journey of discovery and Emeraldas bold protection of him and his new-found family make for an unforgettable hour of superlative anime.

Animation: High OVA movie quality. Exquisite hair and smoke effects, beautiful CG, and vivid lighting effects.

Character Design: Some of the most unique in existence. Ultra-slim female frames, and very unique features on the male characters, like huge rows of teeth and uniquely contorted expressions. Tochiro is the coolest, and Emeraldas is a joy to behold.

Dubbing: ADV always rise to the occasion when they localize treasures like Queen Emeraldas.

Music: Very Star Wars. A first-rate intergalactic soundtrack.

Highlight: There are many. A Tochiro flashback, the old west-style gunfight between commander Eldomain and Emeraldas is super cool, and the final confrontation between the fleet and Queen Emeraldas is actually moving.

Final Analysis: Quite simply, this is a must-own movie. I hope the DVD follows soon, as I'll no doubt wear my tape out.



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EAT-MAN VOL. 1 EPISODE 1&2

•1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM

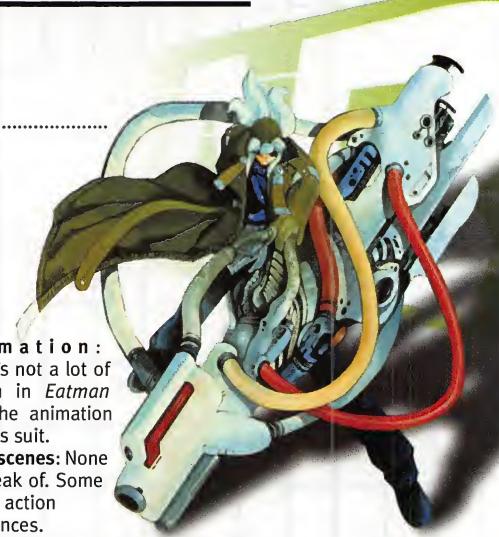
48 MINUTES • ENGLISH SUBTITLES

reviewed by dave halverson



Story: Relying heavily on character interaction and witty dialogue, episode one of Bandai's *Eatman* (based on the Akihito Yoshitomi's popular Japanese comic) unfolds almost entirely in the tiny Sidepass bar among four characters: Mark Mitchell, who's offering a beautiful female mercenary, Culenne Garbo, 5-million lido to hit a mafia boss he's just ripped off, a nosy bartender, and Bolt Crank, aka Eatman. After refusing to take the hit, insisting she's not a hit-man, Culenne takes an interest in Bolt, who to this point, as far as she knows, is the janitor. She soon finds out, however, that there is more to Bolt Crank than meets the eye. When Mitchell puts a gun to Bolt's head, he eats it like a candy bar; hence the name. It's not until Culenne tries to seduce Bolt into joining ranks that we discover the true nature of Bolt's presence in the bar. And he ain't no janitor. A unique slice of anime to say the least.

In episode two, the military is closing in on an island fortress once used for bio-engineering experimentation on living creatures. Desolate, the island is occupied by a powerful sole inhabitant – a mutation that has murdered the island's residents and has laid to waste whole armies who've attempted its apprehension. The military aim to capture the animal, harness its power, brainwash it, and turn it in to some kind of super weapon/soldier. They send in Bolt Crank to assist the curious female scientist Allessa Rupert, who they've hired to find out exactly what the creature is and how they can capture it. As usual, there's a bad seed among the military to provide the intrigue.



Animation:

There's not a lot of action in *Eatman* and the animation follows suit.

Fight scenes: None to speak of. Some short action sequences.

Highlight: The highly stylish end of episode two when Bolt blows the creature away – or does he?

Soundtrack: Groovy '70s spy stuff interlaced with mainstream anime action tunes. Unique and very cool.

Final Analysis: I've really enjoyed the *Eatman* comics (available from VIZ) and now I'm glad they're bringing his dead pan antics to the US anime scene. *Eatman*'s a unique dialogue-intensive series that captivates for reasons other than the usual adventure scenario.



HAUNTED JUNCTION VOL 1- EPISODE 1&2

•1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM

48 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH

reviewed by dave halverson



Story: Haruto Houjo wants one thing – off the friggin' holy student council! But his fellow ghost busters don't seem to mind that Saito High School's halls are haunted, or by the fact that they're coasting through high school never having to attend class in exchange for their mystic powers. This is not your average student council; Mutsuki Asahina is the daughter of a shinto priest, and specializes in exorcisms, which is a good thing since Kazumi Ryudo,

the son of a Buddhist monk, has the ability to possess just about any entity he desires to keep the

school's ghouls and ghosts in check. Haruto's the son of a minister but has no special powers to speak of, or so it seems. A normal school life is all he really wants, and he'll do just about anything to get it. In episode one, the Student Council Chairman promises Haruto his freedom in exchange for finding seven sacred badges that harness the ability to grant the wish of anyone who obtains them. The trio set out to take on the school's seven spirits and successfully snatched the seven badges, fulfilling the chairman's request. Too bad the chairman's big wish is to open the spirit gates and let all the rest of the spooks into the school, because the little freak's a ghoul himself. Doh! In the second episode things get really deranged, as we meet the seven spirits of the school pool, like the mysterious man-faced fish and...man-faced sea cucumbers! Argh! This is going to be a wacky series!

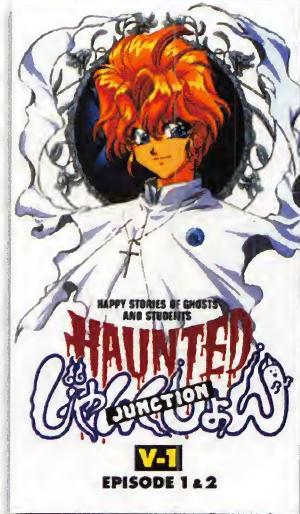
Animation: Average for the most part, although it has its moments. Good TV quality overall.

Character Design: Weird. The humans are standard enough with classic anime features, but some of the ghouls, like the half skinless man with the removable guts, are truly disturbing, in a funny way.

Fight scenes: Very creative. Asahina performs some spectacular and hilarious exorcisms.

Soundtrack: Campy anime tunes throughout fit well.

Final Analysis: A fine situation comedy series with ample doses of freakishness and clever scenarios.



ANIME • REPUBLIC



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02

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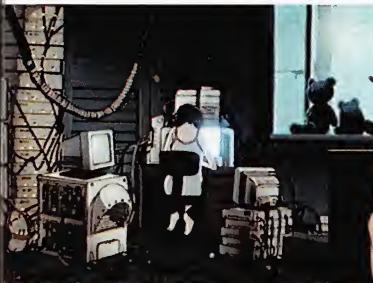
Dub/Sub

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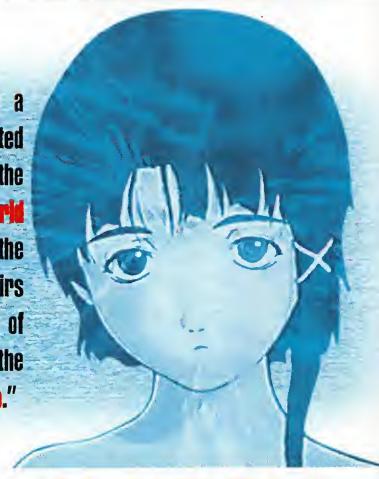
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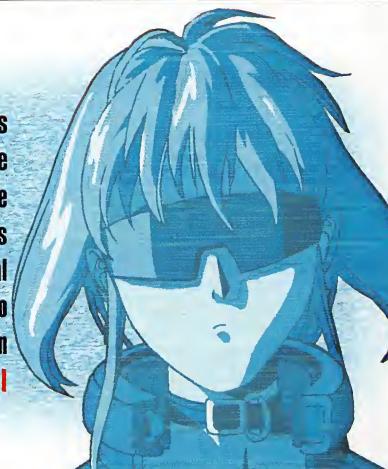
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DVD/Dub

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DNA SIGHTS 999.9

•1999 URBAN VISION
60 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH

reviewed by dave halverson

★★★1/2

Story: A meteor hurtling through space glances off of an alien world, picking up a powerful DNA force in the exchange. Its course altered, the meteor eventually strikes the Earth, nearly decimating the entire population, and changes the course of evolution forever. The Alien planet's peaceful spirits dispatch a guide, Mello, to help return the Earth to its proper evolutionary destiny by assisting three survivors. Two humans and a cat have escaped ground-zero impact and have been altered by exposure to the fire force DNA. But evil forces have moved in as well. Photon and her minions, including slithering piles of liquid earth from the planet's core, are vying for control of the trio, to insure they don't get in the way of their plans for global domination. One deity desires the continuation of humanity, and the other, its demise. The survivors, Tetsuro Daiba, Rei Yuuki, and Mee the cat, must discover their new celestial power and, with the aid of their earthly friends, thwart Photon's evil "Traitor Squads" and restore peace before their inevitable ascension to a higher place.

Animation: Very good throughout.

Character Designs: It's Starblazers all the way!

Dubbing: Seamless. Never forced, under- or over-exaggerated.

Highlight: A special appearance by Captain Harlock and Space Battleship Yamato!



YUNA RETURNS

•1999 ADV FILMS
90 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH

reviewed by dave halverson

★★★1/2

Story: Yuna befriends a cute little android who happens to be one of three maniacal android sisters, the most destructive government experiment gone awry the universe has ever seen. They're so evil, in fact, that they were exiled to a black hole! Cast out and unwanted, they are filled with hate and bad intentions, wanting nothing more than the Earth's complete destruction...after they take care of cute little Yuna and her yappy little band of super friends.

Yuna, fruity friends in tow, convinces the youngest of the trio to switch sides, but when her two sisters come a' knockin' the planet gets rockin! These chicks are pissed and highly volatile.

Animation: Made for TV quality abounds. Not very good, I'm afraid.

Character Design: The best part of the show. Too bad the animation's not up to the task at hand.

Dubbing: ADV do a nice job, providing Yuna is meant to be a squeak fest. It's like a puppy that never stops yapping.

Highlight: Definitely the

scenes involving the android sisters. They have serious bad intentions.

Soundtrack: Pretty cheesy overall.

Fight Scenes: They have their (brief) moments, but, for the most part, are nothing to write home about in terms of animation. Subject matter's another thing. They're interesting enough but the presentation's just not there.

Final Analysis: Not nearly as good as the original, but I'm not wild about Yuna in the first place. The themes are cool but the girls are so young I find it hard to get into. There's not enough nastiness going around. Younger kids will no less dig it.



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GRANDOLL

•1999 CENTRAL PARK MEDIA
90 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH

reviewed by dave halverson



Story: Hikaru falls to Earth in a space capsule, practically lands on her adopted parents, and has amazing super powers. Remind you of anyone? Beuller, Beuller...? She grows up a huge anime fan not knowing that she herself is the Crown Princess of the Planet Gran and therefore sole heiress of the most powerful armor in the galaxy. In episode one, after we're introduced to her dad (professor and gadgeeteer), mother, best friend, and high school squeeze, we get to see the sparks fly for the first time. When her way of life is threatened, Hikaru becomes Hyper Speed Grandoll for the first time in an animated transformation sequence reminiscent of *Devil Hunter Yohko*. Not a moment too soon; I was growing somewhat weary of the high school hijinx, when low and behold hot mecha action broke out as Hikaru burst out of her school duds and into the tight-titanium action suit, The Royal Armor. Once she dons the Armor things take a decidedly sci-fi direction. Invaders from her home planet will stop at nothing to possess her incredible suit, and so once they find her, the entire planet is in peril. It's a cliché scenario, but it's executed well, in this case with a compilation of dad's wacky gadgets, high school hijinx, and



English Language Dialogue

hardcore space duels.

Animation: Good TV quality with an emphasis on the battle sequences.

Character Design: The battle armor designs are excellent and the professor's inventions are quite novel as well.

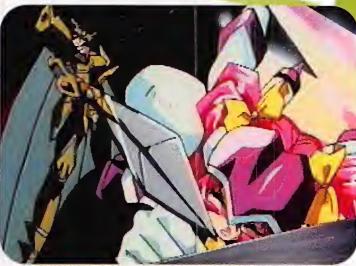
Dubbing: Hikaru's super cute, but is voiced ok for the most part. The rest of the dub seems way off. The enemies don't sound nearly foreboding enough.

Soundtrack: Sparse. Pretty standard otherwise.

Fight Scenes: A little short but well executed and animated.

Highlight: Hikaru's alarm clock!

Final Analysis: A three-episode series worthy of your attention if you don't mind slightly girlish themes with your sci-fi action. It's cute on the one hand but also features mild violence and a good amount of nudity.



THOSE WHO HUNT ELVES

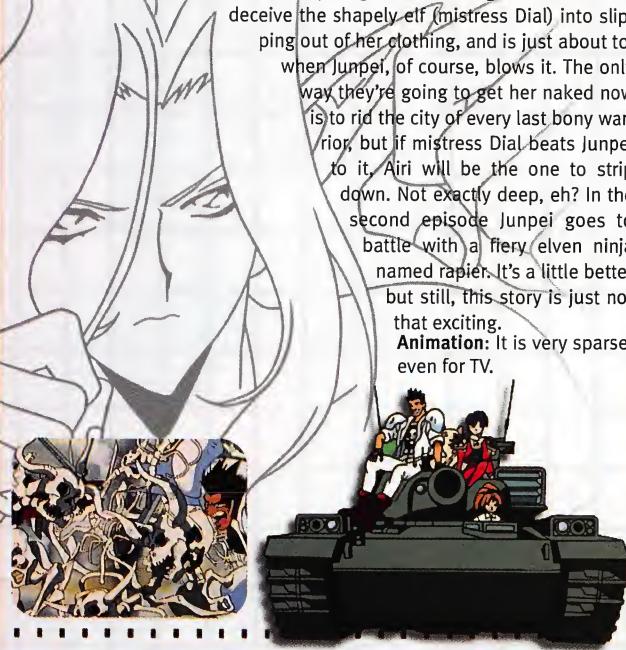
•1999 ADV FILMS
60 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH

reviewed by dave halverson



Story: In episode one, Junpei, Airi, Ritsuko, and Celcia (who's still a dog) arrive in a city under siege by a group of skeletal terrorists. The city is protected by a powerful female Elf mistress, so, of course, it's time to drop trou (and everything else) once again. Airi tries to deceive the shapely elf (mistress Dial) into slipping out of her clothing, and is just about to, when Junpei, of course, blows it. The only way they're going to get her naked now is to rid the city of every last bony warrior, but if mistress Dial beats Junpei to it, Airi will be the one to strip down. Not exactly deep, eh? In the second episode Junpei goes to battle with a fiery elven ninja named rapier. It's a little better but still, this story is just not that exciting.

Animation: It is very sparse, even for TV.



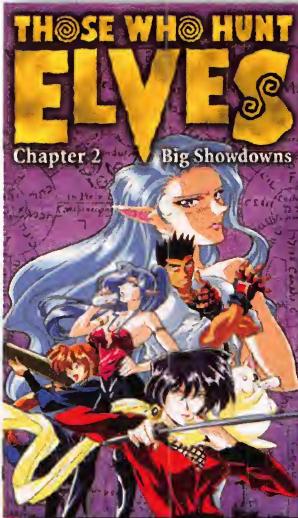
Dubbing: These episodes are well acted and scripted.

Character Design: A lack of detail keeps them from coming alive although the art style is desirable.

Fight scenes: Pretty uninspired. They just don't pack any punch.

Highlight: Ritsuko casually rolls up in a tank up when a hostile draws a bazooka. Mistress Dial's, shall we say, growth spurt is pretty cool too.

Final Analysis: While *Those Who Hunt Elves* may be not be much on the eyes, it does have a witty spirit, good writing, and one thoroughly whacked out plot. It also deals with elves, and everyone loves elves. Me, I prefer a deeper plot and a lot more animation.

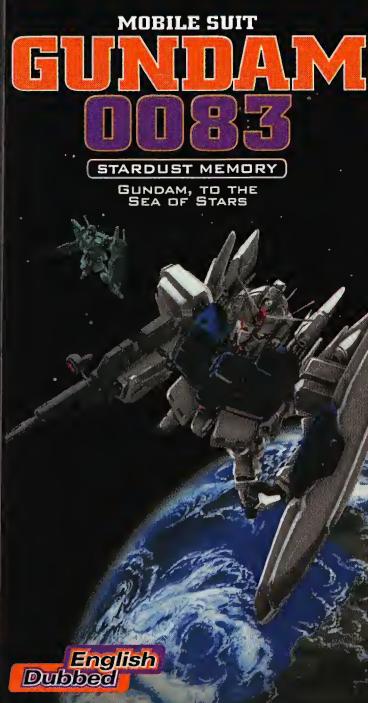


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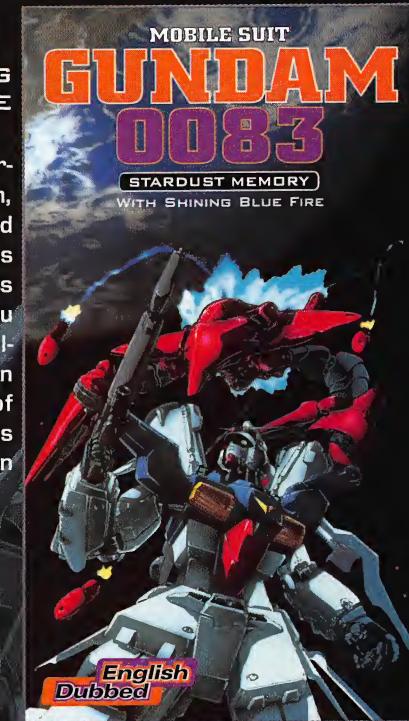
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MONKEY MAGIC EPISODES 1-7
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 reviewed by dave halverson



Story: *Monkey Magic* takes place in a world divided between man and monkey, overseen and kept at peace by celestial beings in the sky. But the evil Dearth Voyd, lord of the netherworld (and universal champion of all monsters) wants to rule over all of it. To vanquish the guardian and his teachings, Dearth must seize control over a monkey savior (the stone monkey) that falls from the heavens, so he sends in his evil little lackey, Batty, to befriend the monkey and eventually get him to sign a pact with the dark side. Or at least that's the plan. On tape one (episodes 1-3) stone monkey wastes no time developing his skills. He begins his reign by chasing the humans out of the monkey homeland, Flower Fruit Mountain, then has his first encounter with Prince Nata. Nata, the pint sized son of a celestial general, is sent down by the gods to contain the pesky primate. Upon the stone monkey's first defeat (Nata works him), he embarks on a three-year journey to obtain divine power from the hi-priest, Sibita. Triumphant, after much personal discovery at the hands of the wisest of the wise, stone monkey assails to a higher consciousness and becomes Congo the monkey king. Having mastered both flight and the abi-

ty to clone himself, by episode four Congo is ready to return home, but when he does, he finds that the humans have overrun his people and are about to send them to their doom.

Dubbing: *Monkey Magic* is in syndication on American TV and features highly polished American voice acting.

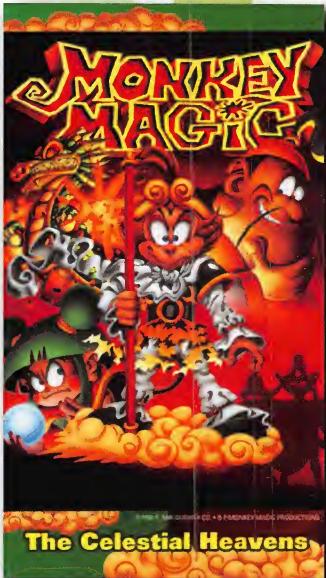
Animation: The CG's not as detailed as *Reboot's* but it's impressive and there's lots of it. The 2D elements are beautifully colored and shaded with good-quality movement throughout.

Character design: Anyone who reads (or should I say looks at) Japan's number one gaming magazine, *Famitsu*, will instantly recognize the phenomenal style of Susumu Matsushita, the master of shading and cool critter design. Now imagine a whole universe of his creations and you've got monkey magic!

Soundtrack: A very catchy Saturday-morning cartoon-style opening, followed by good quality upbeat music throughout. The end credits theme has a cool Chinese ring to it.

Fight scenes: They're light on violence, with only mild carnage, but long, highly creative and very well choreographed.

Final Analysis: *Monkey Magic* may be aimed at a young audience, but its great visuals and universal message of self respect, discovery, and humility is one that we can all benefit from. Dare I say fun for the whole family? Ah, what the heck!



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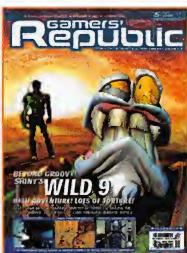
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LUNAR: SSSC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 69

There are two aspects of this epic that I found less than stellar: I like the old music better—a lot better—and some of the speech during battles wore a bit thin after a few hundred clashes. Overall, I think battle cries are a good idea, but I think they should evolve with a character's strength and experience. The re-recorded soundtrack is very good and of the utmost quality, but in my opinion it doesn't convey the sense of majesty that the original did. Of course that's just my opinion; I could be wrong. These slight personal misgivings don't even nick the surface of this momentous fable that is filled with well over 50 hours of hard-core role-playing, seldom exhibited on any format. Working Designs have done a fantastic job on the speech and taken full advantage of Dual Shock technology to bring you the ultimate Lunar experience. Not only does the controller rumble, but it does so to match the cadence onscreen during the game and the cinematics! For those of you who appreciate a bit of modern humor in your role-playing diet, plenty can be found around the game's outskirts. Sticking to the main conversations, the story unfolds in traditional form, but should you stray into the game's many nooks and crannies you'll find all manner of pop culture witticisms.



A word to the wise before I run out of space. If you're in the market for a Lunar SSSC Strategy guide, may I suggest the WD Official version. The budget (or as we say here at GR, "boo-jae") books made from versions obtained in shady ways will not include the correct hidden bromite locations, as WD had the foresight to derail their unofficial ways and changed them at the last minute. The WD book is also filled with extensive maps, intelligent writing, and official art. So do yourself a favor and make an effort to seek out the Official guide. I'm not against unofficial strategy guides when the developer and publisher have given their blessing, but hack books made from beta versions sold to the highest bidder... well, that's not good for anyone.

And so there you have it. Lunar not only lives up to the hype, but exceeds it by setting a new benchmark in packaging at the same time. A finer package and contents you will not find on these shores.

May you all achieve the status of Dragonmaster ... before the sequel hits, perhaps this year!



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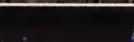
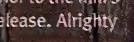
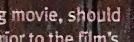
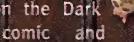
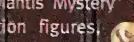
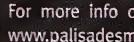
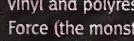
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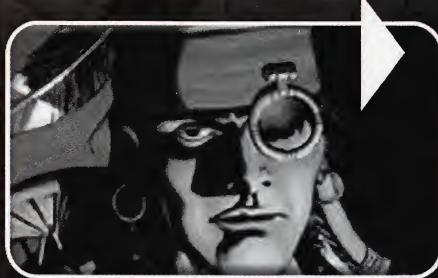
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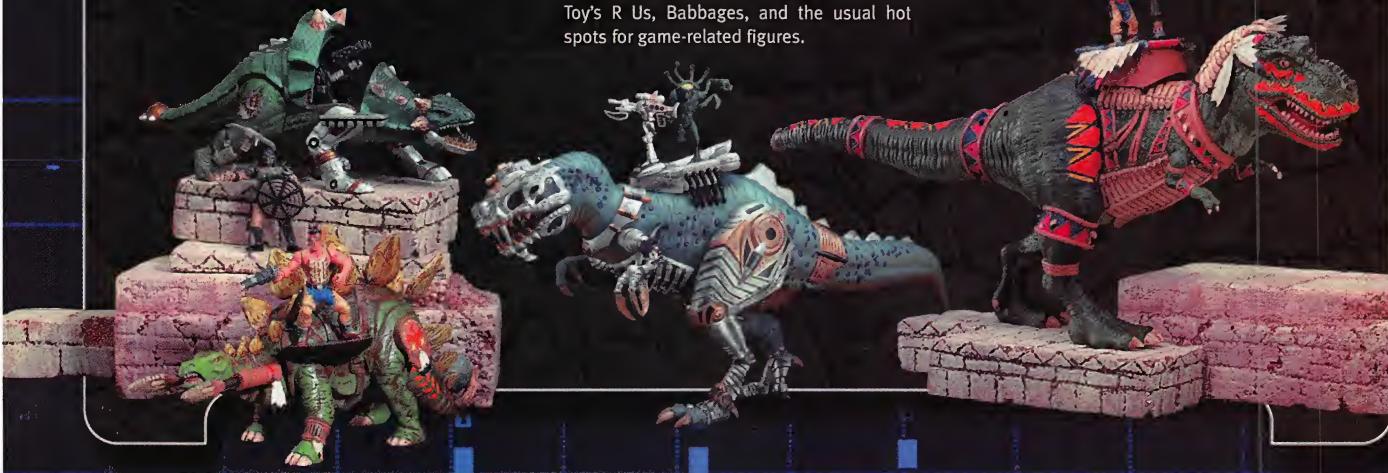


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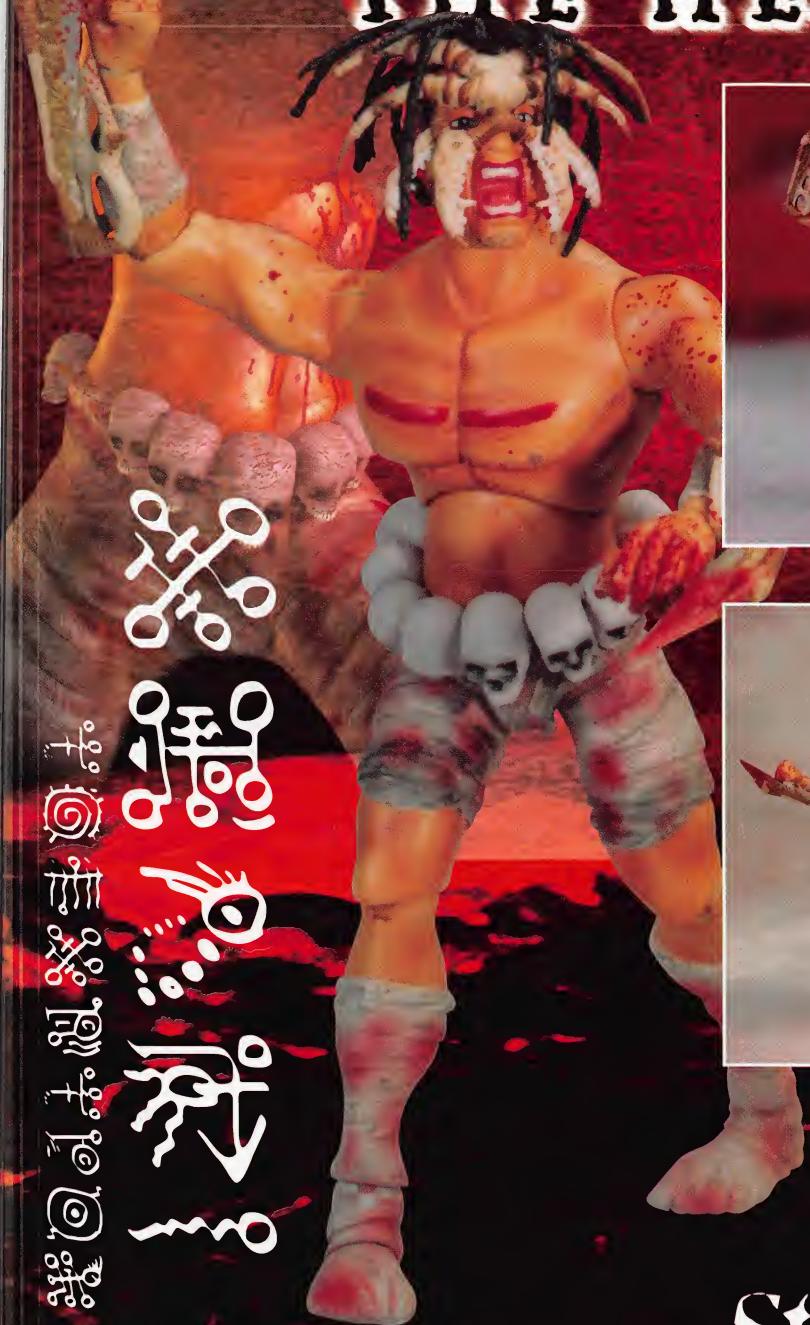


Well, you've always dreamt of fondling Lara, haven't you? While the plastic version may not satisfy your carnal urges, they do look mighty good just about anywhere you put them. Playmates have done a great job on both the sculpting and the packaging, a far cry from the original fish-lip Lara from the '98 lineup. The Turok sets below look nice as well. It's good to see Turok has feet, if you know what I mean. Playmatestoys.com (make sure to, er, type in toys, or else) has all the information you could ever need on Lara, Turok, and all of their other cool toys. Or you can just keep your eyes peeled for them at Toys R Us, Babbages, and the usual hot spots for game-related figures.



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Yes, it's the new Orbital. It's been 2 1/2 long years since we were amazed, lulled, and caressed by the *Insides* double album. I remember how "The Box" opened so gently, so perfectly... Now I'm enjoying yet another Orbital masterpiece. *Middle of Nowhere* is a captivating album from the Hartnoll brothers, of Sevenoaks origin. It's immediately apparent that the years have been kind to the pair. The first track, "Way Out," fills oh so much of the spectrum with gorgeous and uplifting rhythm through bass, horns, soothing strings, and subtle vocal use. My first listen, I fought away the anxiety and smiled during the chills; somehow I felt so proud of Orbital, so happy to accept their music again and feel the soul of electronic masters so far beyond the norm. Tracks like "Know Where to Run" are perhaps the best example of a "new" Orbital sound; as amazing rolling beats merge into a brilliant synth chorus and slightly uncharacteristic tempo swaps. It's still so clearly Orbital that I'm listening to: the unparalleled layering, the distinctive build ups that grow and morph into lush drum-filled symphonies of cutting ambience, the trippy abstract vocals, and non-stop flow to and from each track. There's a profound ebb and flow between pieces, and these midway points, like those in

every Orbital album, become essential for interpretation. Excellent, cerebral album.

Mike Griffin

Orbital *Middle of Nowhere*
FFRR, Import/Domestic

A-

Unless you are without TV, you've likely seen and heard Furslide's first hit off of their debut CD Adventure, titled "Love Song."

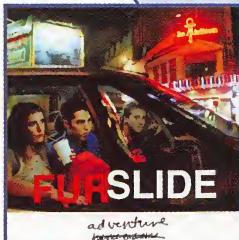
Wondering if the rest of this CD is as fresh? Well, yes and no. This is a peculiar mix of straight rock tunes for the most part, although they do take some chances. And it's when they do that Furslide seems to gel. Falling somewhere between '80s reminiscent rock like "Skinny Girl" and adventurous thought-provoking tunes like "Hawaii," Furslide present the listener with a diverse array of musical themes. It's as if they really weren't sure what we'd like, so they threw down a mele of selections. Synth free, it's all good, and highly listenable, although none of it really grabs me the way the title track did. Compared to almost everything else out there, Furslide's sound doesn't seem to have enough meat on its bones. Ambient sounds in the background or perhaps a little synthesizer action would have made all the difference. It needs more layers. Then again, if you're looking for an old school rock 'n' roll band with a female lead and some new ideas, well, you've arrived. All one of you.

Horselover Fat

Furslide Adventure

Virgin, Domestic

C-

The CD cover for Furslide's 'Adventure' features a dark background with a collage of various images, including what looks like a city street at night and some abstract shapes. The title 'FURSLIDE' is prominently displayed in large, bold, white letters across the center, with 'adventure' written in smaller letters below it.

Gamers' Republic Music Reviews

Wow, a new Underworld and Orbital all at once? And a new Chemical Bros. LP this year? It's too much. *Beaucoup Fish*, brought to you once again by Emmerson, Hyde, and Smith, is easily one of the finest albums released so far in '99, and it may be their best release yet. Underworld helped to raise the bar for Techno in the early '90s and they've only improved with time. The first track, "Cups," a 12-minute epic, is a perfect selection to kick off *Beaucoup Fish*, gathering at once a pleasant meandering beat, minimal bassline, and inviting computer-modified vocals. Eventually it runs its course, colliding solidly with a pumping beat splayed out across Underworld's patented furious and spatial percussive layers. "Push Upstairs" (currently receiving *beaucoup* air play) follows, slapping down gorgeous and intense piano composition over straight-to-the-point kicks and vocals. Underworld are truly lords of the techno build up, leading you through layers of increasing atmosphere, whether it's tension or madness, calming or floor filling. "King of Snakes" is destined to be an essential track for DJs to lay on the crowd halfway through an evening set, if only to convince people that the floor should be stomping again. As an album listener, however, you'll be treated to a near perfect mix of chilled melodies, edgy electro, and incredible techno.

Mike Griffin

Underworld *Beaucoup Fish*
JBO/V2, Domestic

A

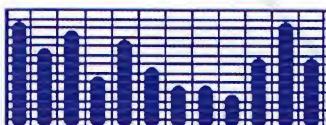
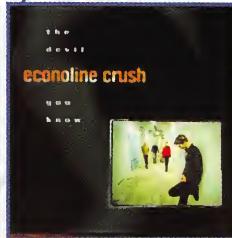
I have discovered another excellent band that has eluded me thus far in my search for good music in the '90s, Econoline Crush. Not that I should already know of them, as they are a somewhat obscure Vancouver-based band. Their new CD, *The Devil You Know*, is one of the most thoroughly enjoyable rock CDs I've heard since VAST's debut last year, as nearly every track is worthy of your deepest attention. Their sound, a fusion of electronica and industrial, is complimented by meaningful lyrics skillfully poured over the rock-infused rhythms by lead singer Trevor Hurst. His song writing, which addresses such topics as the price of fame in "Sparkle and Shine" and his own dark personality on "Hollowman," is heartfelt, and he possesses a unique bellowing voice. So often the best new music is ruined by ritual screaming or complaint-rock whining. In his own words Hurst's offers this take on the bands aural approach. "Take a

bootload of rock 'n' roll, some electronica and dash of hip-hop, throw it in a blender, put it on puree, pour it in a glass, and that's ECONOLINE CRUSH. I think it's just modern rock, in the simplest of terms. We have a big palette and paint from all those sources." Of the CD's 14 tracks, the last, "Razorblades and Band-aids," an emotional tune with soaring guitars and melancholy lyrics, is the one playing over and over in my head. Keep listening though...a Japanese surprise awaits!

Dave Halverson

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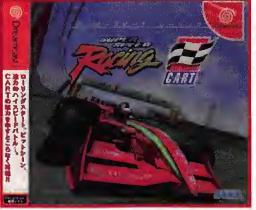
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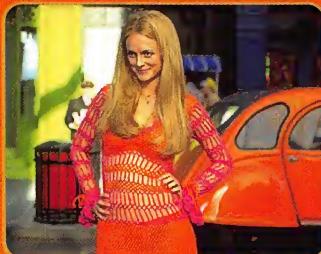


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AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME

NEW LINE CINEMA

The final scenes of the first Austin Powers opus showed a frozen Dr. Evil (Mike Myers) escaping into outer space in a Bob's Big Boy-turned-rocket pod, after vowing vengeance on our intrepid hero Austin Powers (Mike Myers). Well, he's back, and goes back in time to the '60s to steal Austin's mojo, which puts a cramp in his '90s honeymoon with Vanessa (Elizabeth Hurley). Luckily, British intelligence has created a time machine of their own, which allows Austin to follow Evil and retrieve his shagadelicness. All the players from the first movie are here:



Michael York as Basil Exposition, Robert Wagner as Number 2, Seth Green as Scott Evil; along with newcomers (to the Austin Powers story, at least) Heather Graham as CIA agent Felicity Shagwell, Rob Lowe as a young Number 2, Gia Carides as Robin Swallows, and Verne Troyer as Dr. Evil's clone-gone bad Mini-Me. Of course, Myers plays multiple roles



again, and in addition to Austin Powers and Dr. Evil, plays the henchman Fat Bastard. Also expect to see a cameo by Jerry Springer, and Elvis Costello not only gets a bit onscreen part but contributes to the soundtrack, which features a collection of '60s hits re-recorded by such '90s artists as Madonna, Lenny Kravitz, Scary Spice, and R.E.M., as well as Dr. Evil's heartfelt performance of "Just the Two of Us." Just the thing to set the mood.

Also of note: *The Spy Who Shagged Me* features the new Dolby Digital Surround EX format, and is the second film to do so. The first? *Star Wars: Episode One* (maybe you've heard of it?)! Way to go, Austin baby! Oh, behave!

SOUTH PARK: LONGER & UNCUT

It must be the '90s; here's a cartoon show originally put together as a 5-minute short (and a shocking one at that – my wife still hates it!) to get the attention of Hollywood execs that's gone on to boost a cable channel into the big leagues and is now set to hit the big screen this month. While the plot isn't nearly as guarded as another certain film, I won't spoil the fun by revealing too much (it involves Mr. Hat, Military school, a conflict in Canada, and loads of swearing). And if you're a fan like I am, the plot is secondary; I'm more interested to see how far Trey Parker and Matt Stone have pushed the studio in this production (they've rejected the advice to tone it down for a PG-13 rating in order to maximize profits from the project). Two things are guaranteed: this isn't a movie for kids (although they'll see it somehow, I'm sure...), and Kenny dies. Early.



PARAMOUNT

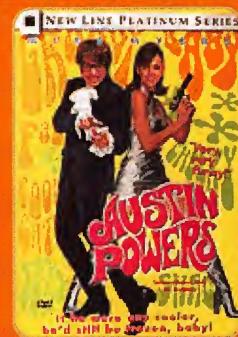


Rated R; In theaters June 18

AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY DVD

NEW LINE

Can't wait for the new *Austin Powers* movie? Then run over to your favorite media outlet and get the first movie on DVD! This high-definition enhanced disc has standard TV-screen format plus 16:9 enhanced format, Dolby sound, running commentary by Mike Myers and director Jay Roach, seven deleted scenes (including two alternate endings!), the original theater trailer, and special "Star Highlights" that reference other movies the stars of this one have been in, with clips from five other films. While they didn't include official *Austin Powers* martini glasses or a talking standee (like the one here in the Republic office!), you can order tons of *Austin Powers* stuff at New Line's website: www.newline.com. Also available: the "Swedish-made Enlarger," but that ain't my bag, baby.



Rated PG-13; available now

THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

- HERE COME THE ANGELS: The *Charlie's Angels* motion picture is on its way, and we've heard it's slated to star Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz, and Catherine Zeta-Jones. But will it include that '70s feather hairdo? • BUT WHO'LL PLAY LARA?: Eidos interactive's Tomb Raider property has a screenwriter, Steven de Souva (*Street Fighter*, *Judge Dredd*, and *Die Hard*), and a potential director, Stephen Herek (*Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *101 Dalmatians*). The good news: we're one step closer to knowing who'll be the big screen Lara. The bad news: we're not that far yet. Patience, my son... • MONSTERS AND TOYS AND COMPUTERS, OH MY: Pixar's next CG movie (after *Toy Story 2*, that is) will be *Monsters Inc.* It'll follow the misadventures of a monster that accidentally brings a little boy into the land of the monsters. Presumably through the secret portal that exists under every child's bed, which is a great thing for a children's movie. Time to invest in night light companies... • AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT: Look for episodes of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* to be released on DVD and VHS later this year by A&E Home Video. No word yet if they plan any extras with the episodes.

- JUST TO BOOST MY WORD COUNT: It's not movie news, but it's still nutty: the Artist formerly known as Prince apparently doesn't have the rights to the master tapes of his last 17 albums released by Warner Brothers, so he plans to re-record the entire collection. That'll keep him off the streets, at least.



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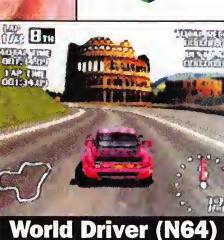
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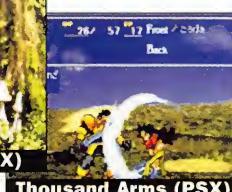
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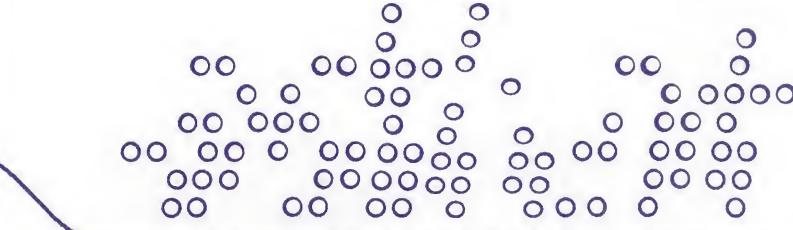
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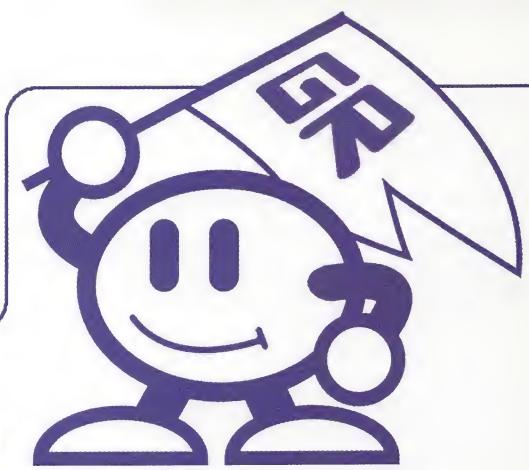
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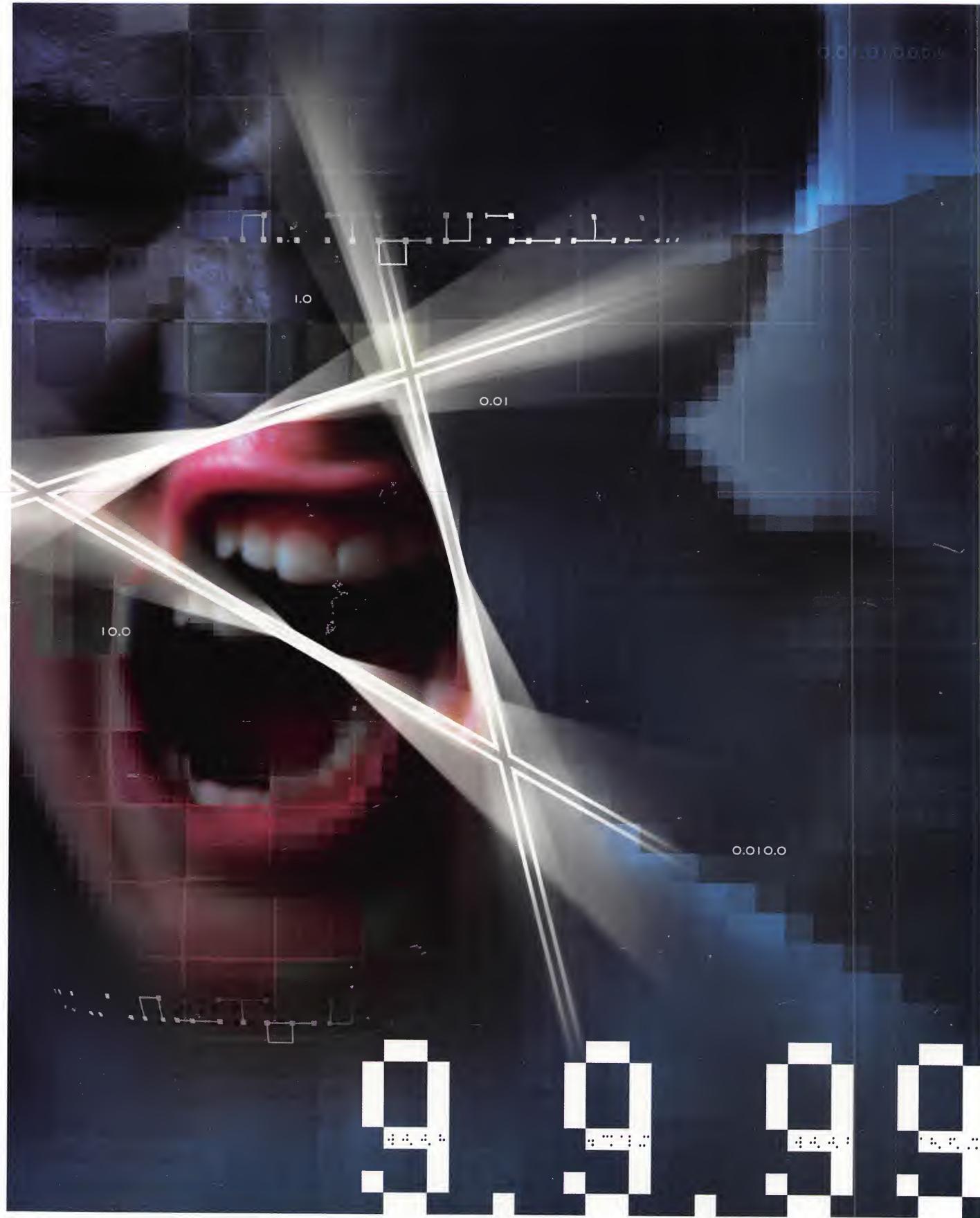


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